

The Philosophy of love

(Bhakti Sutras of Devarshi Narada)

Hanumanprasad Poddar

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PREFACE

It was in the year 1916 that I first came across a Bengali edition of the Aphorisms of Devarsi Nārada. I was then living in seclusion in a distant corner of Bengal, and, through the grace of God, developed some interest in spiritual practices. The Aphorisms of the Devarsi proved very helpful to me in those practices. While I was studying these Aphorisms, I felt an inclination to write out a running commentary on them. In due course a commentary was actually written; but there was then neither the urge nor the facility to bring it out in a book-form. About the year 1920, when I was in Bombay, I casually mentioned to late Seth Khemrajji, the proprietor of Śrī Venkateswara Press, about this commentary, and he very eagerly took the manuscript from me and gave it

for publication to the Press, but there, owing to inadvertence, it remained buried for years under other manuscripts. As I had no particular urge in the matter, I gave him no reminder. Khemrajji passed away. And several years after his death I got the manuscript back from Bombay. I had no mind to get it printed. For I felt it was an act of supererogation on my part to write a commentary on a treatise on *Bhakti*. But this Sattvic feeling of diffidence and hesitation gradually wore off as I came into some prominence and the publication of the book was eventually decided upon. After revision and some amount of alterations, it appeared as a series in the Hindi 'Kalyan', from which a Hindi edition of the book was brought out. The present edition in English is a translation of the Hindi edition and has serially appeared in the 'Kalyana-Kalpataru'.

When this commentary was first written in 1916, there were hardly more than one or two commentaries of the

book either in Hindi or in English. But now several commentaries on it are available in the market. In these circumstances, there can be only two reasons for bringing out this separate edition—(1) a covert desire for name, and (2) expectation of spiritual gain through a critical study of the philosophy of *Bhakti*. The fact of the matter is, the more the subject of *Bhakti* is discussed, the more do we gain spiritually. For the attainment of Divine Love, the practice of *Bhakti* is the foremost discipline, and as an end it is this *Bhakti* which manifests itself as Divine Love. From this point of view, I hope, devout and learned readers will not wholly denounce this attempt and will forgive my impertinence and errors. In Love, it is the sentiment which is more important than language. Though I am not at all qualified to write anything by way of a commentary on *Bhakti*, I have every hope that the generous reader will hail this attempt of mine believing that there

must be some divine purpose, some play of Divine Grace, behind the urge which compelled me to undertake this task. For without Divine Grace, one cannot feel the urge to do any good work. That a critical study of the philosophy of *Bhakti* is a most desirable and profitable work cannot be gainsaid. For in the course of this study I have had naturally to describe the glories of God, the supernatural character of Divine Love and the means of attaining it, and to repeat mentally the sacred Names of God, which must have induced a spray of *Bhakti* even in this dry heart totally devoid of that sentiment. We must put implicit faith in the words of a high-souled devotee who said that through the remembrance and chanting of the Names and Glories of God even the most sinful heart gets purified and becomes innocent like the heart of a child. The chanting of the Glories and Names of God completely washes out the impurities of the heart and flooding it with pure and blissful

divine sentiments helps in the fulfilment of the highest object of life. The scripture says —

महापातकयुक्तोऽपि ध्यायन्निमिषमच्युतम् ।

पुनस्तपस्वी भवति पङ्क्तिपावनपावनः ॥

“By meditating on God even for a moment the most sinful person becomes pure and acquires the capacity to sanctify even those who purify by their very presence ”

Moreover what has been written by way of commentary in this volume is only a digest of what I have gathered from different saints and holy men and there is nothing in it which I can call my own. I would therefore request the reader to overlook my faults and focus his attention on the personality of the Devarsi, his inspired aphorisms and the teachings of scriptures and saints embodied in the commentary. These aphorisms have been recognized as a system of philosophy similar to the six systems associated with the names of Kanāda, Goutama and so on. The

devotees call it the seventh system. Those alone, who possess real wisdom and knowledge of Truth are really qualified to attain Divine Love. In the course of these eighty-four aphorisms, the Devarsī has clearly brought out the philosophy of *Bhakti*, the hindrances to the growth of *Bhakti*, the means of attaining *Bhakti*, and the glory of *Bhakti* and the Bhaktas. It is true, these aphorisms contain an exposition of *Bhakti* as directed towards a Personal God, but this should not lead one to imagine that there is any antagonism between Knowledge and Devotion as described in these aphorisms. On the contrary, citing the example of the Gopīs, the Devarsī has proved that they were conscious of the divinity of their Beloved Lord. Without Knowledge of God, how can one develop Love for Him? And it is equally true that the secret of the Beloved can be known only through intimate, exclusive, constant and unalloyed Love. Therefore, one should not conceive any opposition between *Jñāna* (Knowledge) and *Bhakti*

(Devotion) in these aphorisms. Similarly, *Bhakti* as described here is not opposed to *Karma* (the path of Action) either. Nay, the performance of disinterested action for the sake of God has been enjoined in these Sūtras And even the devotee who has wholly renounced action, can never renounce the act of constant and loving remembrance of God. Therefore, in the *Bhakti* as described by the Devarsi, there is place for both *Jñāna* and *Karma*; only they must be conformable to *Bhakti*. There is no room in it for the dry as dust type of *Jñāna* and *Karma*. It is *Rasa* (Joy) and *Rasa* alone which surrounds it God Himself is *Rasa* personified and it is *Rasa* which is the abode of supreme bliss The *Śruti* also says:—

‘रसो वै सः रसं ह्येवायं लब्ध्वानन्दी भवति ।’

It is through *Bhakti* alone that one can perceive God, the embodiment of *Rasa*; through *Bhakti* alone one can attain the supreme bliss, which even sages

and seers, and gods can scarcely attain
 Therefore, all should take recourse to
Bhakti and *Bhakti* alone The *Bhāgavata*
 says —

“The life of man is frittered away
 with the daily rising and setting of
 the sun, only the time that is spent
 in discoursing upon Śrī Hari is
 usefully spent Do not trees live,
 do not the bellows also breathe?
 And do not the domestic beasts and
 other animals live, eat and procreate?
 He who has never heard the glories
 of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is worse than a beast
 The ears of one who does not hear
 the stories of Śrī Kṛṣṇa are like
 holes in which snakes dwell, the
 tongue of one who does not sing the
 praises of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is useless like
 that of the frog The head that
 does not bow to Śrī Hari is only a
 burden though adorned with silk
 turban or a crown, the hands that
 never worship Śrī Hari are
 similar to those of a dead man,
 although they may be adorned with
 ornaments of gold The eyes that
 do not behold the image of God are
 like the eyes on the plumes of the

peacock, the feet that do not take one to sacred places are like unto the roots of trees. He who never bathes his body in the dust of the feet of the Lord's devotees, is virtually dead even though alive, he who has never inhaled the fragrance of Tulasi leaves offered on Śrī Hari's feet, is as good as dead, although he may be breathing. The heart which does not melt with the utterance of Śrī Hari's Name as indicated by the effusion of tears and horripilation, etc., is adamant, indeed."

In conclusion, I humbly and earnestly entreat all devotees to bless me so that my mind may get exclusively attached to the lotus-feet of the Lord. For, says the *Bhāgavata*.—

"Man is apprehensive about his possessions and his dear and near ones and is in the clutches of sorrow, desire and greed, and the erroneous notion 'This is mine', 'This is mine', which is the root of all suffering, only till he has not taken shelter under Your feet which are free from all fear" (III ix 6)

HANUMANPRASAD PODDAR



Devarshi Narada.

अहो देवर्षिर्धन्योऽयं यत्कीर्तिं शार्ङ्गधन्वनः ।
गायन्माद्यन्निदं तन्त्र्या रमयत्यातुर जगत् ॥

(*Srīmad Bhagavata*, I ११ ८९)

“O Blessed is, indeed, Devarsi Nārada, who goes about playing on his *Vīṇā*, singing the praises of Śrī Hari and through the intoxication of that song scatters joy throughout the afflicted world !”

Kāraka Purusas (Agents of God) appear on earth for the good of the world in the same manner as God Himself takes His incarnation. Their natural function is to prepare the ground for the sports of the Lord, and bring together appropriate materials for His sports. Such Mahāpurusas (great souls), though liberated themselves, do not make use of their privilege of

salvation, and move about in the world among ordinary souls for the latter's spiritual welfare. Although this function of theirs continues at all times without any break, yet during the advent of some special incarnations their activities become more pronounced and more intense. They live their auspicious lives for the highest good of the world. Absolutely devoid of ignorance, egoism, sense of 'Mine' and attachment to worldly objects, etc., these Mahāpuruṣas act as instruments under the control of God. All their activities are, in fact, activities of God Himself. Devarṣi Nārada is a Mahāpuruṣa (great soul) of this type. He is present in all the Yugas, and has free access to all the regions of creation, all scriptures, all societies and all activities of man. He was present in the *Satyayuga* and also in the Yugas of *Tretā* and *Dvāpara*, and, it is said, that even in this dark age of *Kalī* qualified souls are now and then blessed with his *Darśan* (sight). From the highest region like Goloka, Vaikuntha, the region of Brahmā,

etc., to the lowest like Tala, Atala, up to Pātāla, he is free to move without any restriction. Through the power of *Yoga*, he can go wherever he likes in the twinkling of an eye. He is mentioned in all the scriptures, such as, the Vedas, the Smṛtis, the Purāṇas, the Saṃhitās, as well as in the ancient books on Astronomy, Music, etc. From Bhagavān Viṣṇu Himself, Śiva and other Devas down to the terrible Rākṣasas all show him honour and respect and give him their confidence. While on the one hand, the Lord of Devas, Indra, shows deference to his opinion, on the other Kayādhū, wife of Hiranyakaśipu, who was a sworn enemy of the gods, trusting his words regards herself protected in his *Āśrama*. While, on the one hand, he is observed delivering instructions on the Supreme Truth even to Mahāpuruṣas like Vyāsa, Vālmīki and Śukadeva, on the other he is found engaged in the attempt to create misunderstanding and quarrel between two rival parties. But really

speaking, he does nothing for himself. He takes up a work when he finds that this will lead to some good to somebody, or when he observes it as a beautiful act of the drama of divine sport. The misunderstandings and quarrels he creates are all intended for the good of the world and with a view to help forward the sport of the Lord. This is so because every act of his is verily an act of God. Truly speaking, he should be regarded as the very 'Mind' of God Himself, this may be clearly revealed through the grace of God when the personality of the Devarsi is deeply pondered over. There are some writers who contend that there were several Ṛsis bearing the name of Nārada among whom the following seven are considered to be principal — (1) Brahṁā's son, born out of His mind, (2) maternal uncle of Parvata Ṛsi; (3) brother of Arundhatī (wife of Vaśistha), and husband of Satyavatī, (4) the master in the art of carrying tales and creating quarrels.

among people, (5) a courtier of Kubera, (6) one among the eight scriptural authorities in the court of Śrī Rāmachandra, and (7) a member who participated in the sacrifice of snakes performed by King Janamejaya.

We have neither the desire to enter into a controversy whether there was one Nārada or many, nor do we possess the qualification to arrive, through discussion, at the truth about the matter. In our view, we see one and only one Nārada, who performed different acts, as the instrument of God, in the different Kalpas and Yugas, and who is engaged in performing the same even today. It is our intention on the present occasion to say something about that aspect of the Devarṣi's activities which has relation with the propagation of *Bhakti* (Devotion) Really speaking that is the primary function of the Devarṣi. Although learned in all the scriptures and master and teacher of all the truths, in the end the Devarṣi

instructs only on Devotion. It was he who inspired Vālmīki, Vyāsa, Śukadeva, Prahlāda, Dhruva and other great souls to engage themselves in the practice of Devotion. Not only this, with the *Vinā* in hand and singing the sacred Divine Names, he moves about freely and fearlessly through all the Yugas and in all societies, purifying men and women throughout creation and drawing their hearts towards God. The Devarṣi himself has described the incidents of his life during two Kalpas. The portion of the *Bhāgavata* bearing this description is extremely interesting. For my own as well as the reader's delectation a summary of the same is given below —

Maharṣi Vyāsa, possessed of the supernatural vision, divided the Vedas into four parts for the benefit of the people at large. He composed the *Mahābhārata*, which is full of ancient stories and is known as the fifth *Vēda*. He brought forth the Purānas. Thus though he had done all he could for

the spiritual good of all beings, he was not quite satisfied, his heart was not completely at peace; he felt within himself that there was something lacking. In a somewhat dejected mood he went to the bank of the river Saraswatī, and having seated himself there began to reflect as follows: "I have done all I could, and yet why do I feel something lacking within me? Have I failed to deal at length with that aspect of *Dharma*, which is known as *Bhāgavata Dharma*? This *Bhāgavata Dharma* is the dearest object of God and of His beloved *Paramahansa* devotees." No sooner did these thoughts arise in his mind there appeared before him Devarsi Nārada with a happy countenance, singing the praises of Śrī Hari. After mutual greetings and exchange of courtesies, Maharsi Vyāsa described his mental condition to the Devarsi and asked the latter about the remedy. Thereupon, Devarsi Nārada said —

"O best of Munis! In all your books, you have not sung the praises

make it a point to hear, repeat or sing words which express the Divine Names and Glories. O chief of Munis, you are unerring in your vision; there is nothing concealed from you. Now, therefore, you describe the sports of Śrī Hari for the good of the world. Men learned in the scriptures have pointed out that the supreme fruit of man's austerities, practice of 'hearing', performance of daily obligatory rites and possession of a sharp intellect lies only in describing with reverence the glories of Śrī Hari. Please hear the story of my previous birth and then reflect what a change was effected in me through the practice of hearing of the glory of Śrī Hari.

"O great Muni, I was the son of a female servant in my former birth. During a certain rainy season a large number of Mahātmās came to our village to spend their four months of obligatory rest. I was a small child at the time, and my

O chief of Munis, at the first stage I began to take relish in God, and then my understanding became steady and firm. With the help of that pure and firm understanding and through my undefiled form of supreme *Brahma* beyond *Māyā*, I began to perceive the whole of this real and unreal creation as an imaginary projection through *Māyā*. Throughout the rains and autumn those Mahātmās continued to sing the stainless glories of God, hearing which there grew within my heart the Sattvic type of *Bhakti* which is destructive of the other two Guṇas, viz, *Rajas* and *Tamas*. At the time of their leaving the village those Mahātmās who were ever kind to the poor and distressed, finding me to be attached to them, sinless and possessing reverence and control over the senses, delivered to me the most secret knowledge, which was delivered by God Himself, through which I came to understand the power of the *Māyā* of Lord Vāsudeva, an understanding which

“The Mahātmās, then, went away, and I continued to practise *Bhajana* as instructed by them I was the only child of my mother, hence she was extremely attached to me. She knew me to be her only refuge in life. One day a deadly snake sent, as if, by the God of Death bit her, and this caused her death. I regarded the incident as an act of special grace arranged by God, who ever seeks to do good to His devotees, and leaving the village began to travel towards the north. Reaching a dense forest, I came upon a Peepul tree on the bank of a river, sitting under which I collected my mind and began to meditate with reverence on the lotus-like feet of the Lord. At that time my eyes were filled with tears of joy through excess of Love. I observed

Firm adherence to *Bhagavata Dharma* 10. Development of the qualities of a *Bhagavata* within the devotee 11. Attainment of the highest stage of Love. This is how the eleven stages have been described

incidents of your present birth even after the termination of this *Kalpa*.' Thus I learnt that I had gained the favour of God, so bowing myself low to the ground, I left the place and began to move about in the world thoroughly gratified, giving up egoism and jealousy and cultivating innocence, remembering, and singing loudly, without any delicacy, the most secret and blessed Names and Glories of the Lord. Attaching my mind to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, I gave up association with the world. In course of time, that body of mine got destroyed and I attained the pure, divine body of a companion of God.

"At the end of the *Kalpa*, I entered the heart of Brahmā through His breath when He lay down on the ocean of dissolution, withdrawing the entire creation within Himself. At the end of a thousand Yugas, when Brahmā began to re-create the world, I came out from His breath with Marīchi and the other Ṛsis.

"Since then, observing the vow of *Brahmacharya*, I move throughout the three regions, both inside and out, wherever I like Through the grace of God, my admittance is nowhere restricted I go everywhere singing the praises of Hari to the accompaniment of this *Vinā* which is adorned by *Brahma* in the form of sound, and is a gift from God Himself God's compassion on me is so infinite that whenever I merge myself in Divine Love and sing on His sports, that very moment He appears before me and gives me the privilege of His sight, just as an ordinary person appears when called aloud

"Repetition of Śrī Hari's Name is like a strong barque to those who are deeply attached to worldly enjoyments to take them across the ocean of existence That is why I move about singing constantly the praises of Śrī Hari for the good of the world as well as my own Through *Yoga* and other practices

the minds of men attached to the world, cannot be so quickly pacified as through the practice of *Bhajana* of Śrī Hari." Saying this, the Devarsi started from the place singing the Name of Śrī Hari.

According to the *Mahābhārata*, Devarsi Nārada possessed knowledge of all the truths of the Vedas, was honoured and venerated by the Devas, was a specialist in Itihāsas and Purānas, was acquainted with facts of previous Kalpas, knew the laws of *Dharma*, was exceptionally learned in the sciences of Vedic pronunciation and grammar, was a master of music, knew how to decide between two conflicting scriptural injunctions, was fully capable of analysing words, was an eloquent speaker, was wise, possessed of a good memory, possessed of high morality, was a poet, a man of wisdom, capable of coming to a conclusion after scrutinizing all evidences, capable of removing the doubts of learned men similar even to Brhaspati, knew the truths of *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kāma* and *Mokṣa*, possessed a direct vision of all the regions of creation through his power of *Yoga*, recognized those who were qualified for *Mokṣa*,

created quarrels for the good of the world, was a master in the arts of forming alliances and of war, was capable of arriving at truth through inference, was a complete master of all the scriptures, an expounder of laws, a repository of all qualifications and a man of infinite power and brilliance. He was the very embodiment of knowledge, a store-house of learning, the very aggregate of bliss, sustainer of good conduct (सदाचार), unmotivated lover of all souls, a natural friend of the universe, a great teacher of Devotion and the very embodiment of Devotion. After finishing his instruction on every other subject, the Devarṣi by saying 'अथातो भक्तिं व्याख्यास्याम' takes up *Bhakti* (Devotion) as the last and final subject of instruction. This proves that *Bhakti* occupies a very high position in his estimation.

Bowing to the feet of Devarṣi Nārada who moves about the three worlds singing the praises of Śrī Hari out of sheer unmotivated kindness to Jīvas (souls), let us carefully read his instructions on his beloved subject of *Bhakti* (Devotion) and try to mould our lives according to the same.

The Philosophy of Love

(Bhakti Sutras of Devarshi Narada)



Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa

Bhakti Manifested as Divine Love.

अथातो भक्तिं व्याख्यास्यामः ॥ १ ॥

1. Now, we shall expound (the cult of) *Bhakti* (Devotion).

The application of the words 'अथ' and 'अतः' in the aphorism indicates that the great apostle of *Bhakti* cult, the crest-jewel of devotees, the ocean of mercy, the great Devarṣi, who is uninterruptedly engaged in rendering good to the world at large, having already expounded the other cults and disciplines, is now entering on a discussion of the supremely blessed character of *Bhakti* (Devotion) and the means of attaining it for the good of humanity.

सा त्वस्मिन्* परमप्रेमरूपा ॥ २ ॥

2. That (Devotion) is supreme Love directed towards God.

Various forms of Devotion have been detailed in the scriptures, but the one which Devarsi Nārada is going to discuss is characterized as Love. To develop *exclusive Love* for God is Devotion. 'Exclusive Love' denotes that blessed state in which the mind ceases to rely on disciplines such as *Jñāna* and *Karma* (Knowledge and Action), and free from all desires, is exclusively devoted to God, when the mind withdraws itself from all objects of this world and all enjoyments of the next world, and even from the bliss of beatitude, and is solely attached to the supreme object of Love, namely, God, and when all the attraction and attachment that we have for other objects is transferred to the only dearest object, God

* Some read 'कस्मै' for 'त्वस्मिन्'

3. It is (also) nectarean in character.

This exclusive Love for God is real nectar, it is the sweetest thing that can be possessed by a soul whoever gets it attains immortality. Worldly desire is equivalent to death Within the heart of the devotee, who has developed this exclusive Love, no trace of any other desire remains except the pure, ever-growing desire of tasting this Love more and more. It is this extremely rare desire which makes him an instrument in the sports of the Lord, sports which enchant even the hearts of sages, and extricates him from the whirligig of births and deaths in which he was caught through the binding force of *Karma*. He lives constantly in the presence of God, and God, too, ever remains by his side This eternal, inseparable union between the devotee in the path of Love and his object of Love, viz, God, is true immortality. That is

why ignoring salvation, devotees always crave for Devotion (*Bhakti*) *

यल्लब्ध्वा पुमान् सिद्धो भवति, अमृतो भवति,
तृप्तो भवति ॥ ४ ॥

4. On attaining this Supreme Love, (which is, in character, nectarean) man attains *Siddhi*—perfection—and immortality, and gets thoroughly satisfied.

He alone who has drunk the nectar of Divine Love is a *Siddha* (has attained perfection) The word 'Siddhi' here does not mean possession of supernatural powers mentioned in *Yoga* Let alone these powers, the devotee in the path of Love seeks not even the highest *Siddhi* or achievement known as *Mokṣa* or liberation The *Siddhis* promised in *Yoga* eagerly look forward to an opportunity to serve such a devotee, but he always rejects them, inasmuch as he looks upon

* अस विचारि हरिभगत सयाने । मुक्ति निरादरि भक्ति लोभाने ॥

—Tulasidas

them as something very insignificant as compared to Divine Love The Lord Himself says.—

न पारमेष्ठ्यं न महेन्द्रधिष्य
न सार्वभौम न रसाधिपत्यम् ।
न योगसिद्धीरपुनर्भव वा
मय्यर्पितात्मेच्छति मद्भिन्नान्यत् ॥

(*Bhagavata* XI. xiv 14)

“A loving devotee of Mine who has dedicated his self to Me seeks nothing besides Me—neither the position of Brahmā (Creator of the Universe), the seat of Indra (the Lord of heavens), sovereignty over the whole earth, lordship over the nether world, the *Siddhis of Yoga*, nor even *Mokṣa* (liberation) attained through identity with Me.”

A devotee says—

“While I am engaged in the loving worship of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the hairs of my body stand on end, and the mind is filled with rapture Tears of joy flowing from the eyes enhance the beauty of my face and faltering words

interrupted by sobs add to the sweetness of my voice. Thus, I have not a moment's leisure to look to anything else. I, therefore, wonder why the four types of salvation (सलोक्य, समीप्य, सारूप्य and सायुज्य), stand at my door eagerly waiting to serve me as handmaids”*

(*Bodhasara*)

Should the devotee condescend to accept sense-enjoyments and salvation, the powers regulating enjoyments and salvation will consider it a proud privilege to serve him, but the devotee does not care even to look at them

हरिभक्तिमहादेव्याः सर्वा मुक्त्यादिसिद्धयः ।

भुक्तयश्चाद्भुतास्तस्याश्चेटिकावदनुव्रताः ॥

(*Narada Pancharatra*)

“Siddhis like salvation and the various forms of enjoyment of the rare

* रोमाञ्चेन चमत्कृता तनुरिय भक्त्या मनो नन्दित
प्रेमाश्रूणि विभूषयन्ति वदन कण्ठ गिरो गद्गदाः ।
नास्माक क्षणमात्रमप्यवसरः कृष्णार्चन कुर्वता
मुक्तिर्द्वारि चतुर्विधापि किमिय दास्याय लोलायते ॥

type engage themselves as handmaids
to serve the great goddess of Devotion
(of Śrī Hari) ''

The great devotee Kāka-Bhuṣuṇḍi
says —

“Just as water cannot be retained
except in a basin, whatever means
you may adopt to retain it, even so,
O chief of birds (Garuḍa), the bliss
of beatitude cannot exist apart from
Devotion to Śrī Hari’’*

(*Ramacharitamānasa*)

That is why the term ‘Siddhi’ in the
above text should be construed to mean
complete self-gratification through Supreme
Realization. The devotee never feels
the want of anything All his desires
get fully satisfied by securing the loving
affection of his dearest Lord. His

* जिमि थल बिनु जल रहि न सकाई ।
कोटि भौति कोउ करै उपाई ॥
तथा मोच्छ-सुख सुनु खगराई ।
रहि न सकइ हरिभगति बिहाई ॥

immortality lies in this complete satisfaction of desire. Till a person attains this state of complete satisfaction, till he is absolutely free from desires, he has to go through the process of repeated births and re-births under the propelling force of *Karma*. The devotee whose desires are completely satisfied directly perceives the sportive hand of the Lord both in the creative and the destructive process, and begins to regard death itself as a sport. In fact, Death itself is dead to him. Apart from the sport of the Lord, no such terrible thing as Death exists within his consciousness, that is why he feels completely satisfied. As long as the objects of the world appear to possess an independent existence of their own apart from the sport of the Lord, so long does man experience them either as pleasurable or painful, and remains unsatisfied through constant desire for possession of newer and newer objects of pleasure. When, however, he attains the source and fountain of all, when he realizes the essence and totality of all,

then his heart refuses to be drawn towards objects which appear incomplete and only as parts. He attains complete satisfaction through realization of the Whole.

यत्प्राप्य न किञ्चिद्वाञ्छति न शोचति न
द्वेष्टि न रमते नोत्साही भवति ॥ ५ ॥

5. On attaining which (Devotion in the form of Love) man neither craves for anything, nor grieves (over any loss) neither hates nor delights in (any object) nor does he feel any urge (for the acquisition of sense-enjoyments).

The devotee in the path of Love attains that supreme and exalted thing, on attainment of which all other desires cease to exist. Earthly power and pelf, love, beauty, strength, fame, knowledge and dispassion, all that we treasure in this world, and which all men, whether worldly-minded or otherwise, long to possess according to their taste and temperament, appear

altogether insignificant and worthless when compared with that invaluable possession called Divine Love. The aggregate of all these possessions scattered over the whole universe is only like a drop of water as compared to God who is an infinite ocean of all these possessions, what value can these worldly possessions have in the face of that Love which attracts God Himself to its possessor?

Śrī Śukadeva says —

यस्य भक्तिर्भगवति हरौ निःश्रेयसेश्वरे ।
विक्रीडतोऽमृताम्भाधौ किं क्षुद्रैः खातकोदकैः ॥

(*Srīmad Bhagavata* VI xii 22)

“He who is devoted to Bhagavān Śrī Hari, the Lord and repository of supreme good, sports in the ocean of nectar. He cannot feel drawn towards the enjoyments either of this world or of the next which are like the turbid water of a muddy pool.”

Why should the devotee merged in the nectarean ocean of Love crave for other objects?

Just as the devotee craves not for sense-enjoyments or liberation, etc., much less does he mourn the loss of any of his possessions. He regards such losses as an aspect of the Divine sport; that is why he remains merged in bliss at all times and under all conditions. Nay, even if, in the pursuit of Divine Love, he has to forego liberation, which establishes identity with God, he does not feel sorry, on the contrary, he constantly desires that his Love for the Lord may grow from more to more even though he may have to undergo repeated births for the same Goswami Tulasidas says in his *Vinaya-Patrikā* —

"I crave not for salvation, wisdom, worldly possessions, affluence, supernatural powers or extensive glory. Let me have only unmotivated Love for the feet of Śrī Rāma which may grow from more to more every day."*

* चढौ न मुगति सुमति सपति कछु रिधि सिधि त्रिपुल वड़ाई ।
हेतु रहित अनुराग राम पद वढ़ौ अनुदिन अधिकाई ॥

He does not likewise entertain hatred for any creature, or aversion for any object or circumstance which may be loathsome or adverse in the eyes of the world. He visualizes his own Lord in every creature and the sport of the Lord in every object and circumstance, and feels delighted every moment of his life. Says Goswami Tulasidas —

"He sees the world full of his own Lord how can he have any quarrel with anybody ?"*
(*Ramacharitamansa*)

The heart of the devotee is ever so completely merged in Divine Love that it would not find pleasure in any other object even for a moment. The Gopis, addressing Uddhava, said —

"O Uddhava, we do not possess ten or twenty hearts. The one we possessed has been carried away by Śyāma (Śrī Kṛṣṇa), Who is then to worship God ?"†

* निज प्रभुमय देखहि जगत, का सन करहि विरोध ॥

† ऊधौ, मन न भए दस बीस ।

एक हुतो सो गयो स्याम रंग, को आराधै ईस ॥

The heart of the devotee no longer stays with him, how, then, will it take pleasure in other objects? That is why the God of these Love-intoxicated devotees is called "stealer of the heart".

"This Śyāma (Kṛṣṇa) is a great
robber

His bewitching Form has stolen our
hearts by a mere glance from the
corner of His eyes"*

(*Suradas*)

He so dexterously steals the heart of the devotee and makes it His own possession, that no other object will be able even to look at it. There is room for attraction or attachment of the mind only where something else is visible to us, but when there is hardly any scope for conceiving any other object, who will have attraction for whom? The Love-intoxicated Gopīs said.—

"Śyāma (the blue bodied Kṛṣṇa) is
our body, Śyāma is our mind, Śyāma
is our wealth,

* मधुकर स्वाम हमारे चोर ।

मन हर लियो माधुरी मूरति निरख नयन की कोर ॥

O, Uddhava, all the twenty-four hours we are occupied with Śyāma. Śyāma is in our heart, Śyāma is the breath of our life, without Śyāma

we can have no satisfaction.

The Name of Śyāma is our only support like the blind man's staff, Śyāma is our refuge, Śyāma is our thought, Śyāma the Lord of our life. Our happiness lies in Śyāma who is the bestower of all happiness and

the store-house of all beauty

Uddhava, you are, indeed, mad that you come running with the Gospel

, of Yoga

Where shall we keep your knowledge of 'Yoga', when every pore of our body is filled with Śyāma ?'*

* स्याम तन स्याम मन स्याम है हमारो धन,
 आटो जाम ऊधी हमे स्याम ही मो काम है ।
 स्याम हिए स्याम जिए स्याम त्रिनु नाहीं तिए,
 ओवे की सी लकरी अधार स्याम नाम है ॥
 स्याम गति स्याम मनि स्याम ही है प्रानपति,
 स्याम सुखदाई सों भलाई सोभाधाम है ।
 ऊधौ तुम भए वौरे पातो लैके आये दौरे,
 जोग कहौ राखै यहाँ रोम रोम स्याम है ॥

How can there be any incentive to possession of other objects when the doors of the heart are closed against the entrance of every other object but the dearest Śrī Kṛṣṇa? You strive for acquiring an object only when you perceive or hear of it and develop a craving for it. You feel an urge for its acquisition only when the mind dwells on it with pleasure. In the case of the devotee, however, his heart has already become the monopoly of another, who has taken full possession of it and made it his permanent habitation. No room is left in it for holding any other object. Even if any object approaches for admittance, it has to return disappointed from a distance. For there is no help, no accommodation is available inside.

“Harī (God) permeates through every pore, not the least space is left unoccupied”*

* रोम रोम हरि रमि रह्यो, रही न तनिकौ ठौर ।

Whom can the poor eyes see without the consent of the mind? When nothing else is visible, an urge for its possession is altogether out of the question.

Again, one feels an urge to possess an object from which he expects to derive some pleasure. When one has the fount of all joy by his side, how can there be any urge for the enjoyment of trivial pleasures? That is why lovers of God, who are embodiments of Love, are never observed to show any ardour in the pursuit of worldly activities, or worldly enjoyments

The Lord Himself says —

यो न हृष्यति न द्वेष्टि न शोचति न काङ्क्षति ।
शुभाशुभपरित्यागी भक्तिमान् यः स मे प्रियः ॥

(*Srimad Bhagavadgita* XII 17)

“He who never rejoices nor feels repugnance (for anything), who neither grieves nor longs (for anything), and who has renounced both good and evil, that devotee is dear to Me ”

यज्ज्ञात्वा मत्तो भवति स्तब्धो भवति आत्मारामो
भवति ॥६॥

6. Realizing which (Devotion in the form of Supreme Love) man becomes mad, silent, and delighted in Self.

As soon as Divine Love manifests itself in a person, it makes him mad. The devotee gets thoroughly intoxicated with this Love and begins to spend his days and nights in singing the praises of his beloved Lord, in hearing His glory and in reflecting on His virtues. He remains oblivious of other external things. Just as a maniac talks and does whatever he likes, even so the Love-intoxicated devotee remains merged in the thoughts and talks of the Lord; for this is the one occupation to which his mind feels attracted. The *Bhāgavata* says:—

“Hearing the blessed and universally known stories of the birth and sports of Lord Viṣṇu, the Wielder of the Discus, the devotee loses all sense of decorum and moves about in the world un-

attached chanting in a loud voice the Names of God indicative of such sports His heart melts through Love as he habitually chants the Names of his beloved Lord in this way and like one possessed, he now bursts into peals of laughter, now weeps, now cries, now sings aloud and now begins to dance in a singular way '*.

Thus behaving like a mad man and filled with ecstasy the devotee sometimes assumes complete silence and sits motionless like a statue But this suspended animation indicates only the supreme gratification of his desires The Lord has manifested Himself within his heart, and the devotee enraptured by the transcendent beauty of that Divine Form gets absorbed in meditation

Goswami Tulasidas, describing the condition of Sutikṣṇa, says —

* शृण्वन् सुभद्राणि रथाङ्गपाणे-
 र्जन्मानि कर्माणि च यानि लोके ।
 गीतानि नामानि तदर्थकानि
 गायन् विलज्जो विचरेदसङ्गः ॥

"The sage sat motionless on the way. Through excess of joy his frame horripilated and assumed the appearance of a jack fruit (the skin of which is covered with bristles) " *

Such is the condition of the devotee when through ecstatic dance he becomes one with the Lord. His mind and body get absolutely stilled. The soul gets enraptured with joy. Such is the condition of the *Ātmārāma*, one who is delighted in the Self. In this state of self-rejoicing no trace of a thirst for worldly enjoyments is left within the heart.—

न हि स्वात्मारामं विषयमृगतृष्णा भ्रमयति ।

(*Siva-Mahimna-Stotra*)

He loses consciousness of everything else. This is the state of Identity or Union reached through Love or *Rasa* (प्रेमाद्वैत or रसाद्वैत). Through Union with the Beloved, the Lover loses his separate existence.



एवंव्रतः स्वप्रियनामकीर्त्या

जातानुरागो द्रुतचित्त उच्चैः ।

हसत्यथो रोदिति रौति गाय-

त्युन्मादवन्त्यति लोकबाह्यः ॥

(*Srīmad Bhagavata* XI ii 40)

* मुनि मग माहिं अचल है बैसा । पुलक सरीर पनसफल जैसा ॥

Exclusive Character of Devotional Love.

सा न कामयमाना निरोधरूपत्वात् ॥७॥

7. Love has no element of desire in it, being of the nature of *Nirodha* (renunciation).

Renunciation is the very essence of this devotional Love. It cannot co-exist with desire of any sort, not even the desire for liberation, to say nothing of petty desires like those for possession of wealth, progeny, fame or enjoyment in heaven. That Devotion in which the devotee expects, seeks or asks for something in return is tainted by desire, it is a selfish transaction. The devotee in the path of Love seeks nothing else than the dearest object of his Love, viz., God and His service. In the *Bhāgavata*, Bhagavān Kapiladeva, an incarnation of

God, says : "Devotees who follow the path of Love seek nothing else than My service. They do not accept, even when offered, the five forms of salvation, viz., *Sālokyā* (residence in the abode of the Lord), *Sārṣṭi* (enjoyment of Divine powers), *Sāmīpyā* (nearness to God), *Sārūpyā* (similarity of form with the Lord) and *Sāyujyā* (complete identity with the Lord)." * With the rise of true Devotion, desires disappear as a matter of course. The reason for this is that renunciation is the very pith and marrow of Devotion. It is wholly exclusive or all-absorbing in character. Now let us examine what is meant by renunciation

निरोधस्तु लोकवेदव्यापारन्यासः ॥८॥

8. Renunciation consists in relinquishing all forms of action, secular as well as religious.

* सालोक्यसार्ष्टिसामीप्यसारूप्यैकत्वमप्युत ।

दीयमानं न गृह्णन्ति विना मत्सेवनं जनाः ॥

When devotional Love grows, renunciation of action (*Karma*) becomes automatic. The devotee intoxicated by Love knows nothing but his beloved Lord. His mind gets moulded into the Form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and constantly remains in that state. He has ever before his eyes the beloved form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and nothing else. His mind or heart never goes to any other object. The Gopīs addressing the Lord, said —

“O dearest Love, our hearts which were happily attached to our homes have been stolen away by You. Our hands which were engaged in domestic work have been paralysed as it were, and our feet are loth to move a step aside from You. How shall we return home, and returning home what shall we do?”*

(*Srīmad Bhagavata* X xxix 34)

* चित्तं सुखेन भवतापहृतं गृहेषु
यन्निर्विशत्युत करावपि गृह्यकृत्ये ।
पादौ पदं न चलतस्तव पादमूलाद्
यामः कथं ब्रजमथो करवाम किं वा ॥

Since the very picture of the world gets erased from the tablet of his mind, the devotee is no longer capable of any action enjoined by the Smṛtis or the Vedas. It is therefore that all such activities leave him of their own accord. Describing the state of such a devotee, the saint-poet Sundardas says—

“A devotee in the path of Love
loses all sense of decorum pertain-
ing to the three worlds, nor does
he follow the injunctions of the
Vedas,
He dreads not ghosts nor evil spirits,
nor is he afraid of gods and demigods,
He gives ear to none, sees nothing
else, has no other craving,
And speaks of nothing else, these
are the marks of Devotion in the
path of Love
Now he laughs and dances, and
now begins to weep,
Now his voice is choked, words do
not come out of the throat,
Now his heart surges with emotion,
and he begins to sing at the top of
his voice,
Now he sits mute and vacant as
the sky overhead

His heart and all his belongings
 being given over to Śrī Hari (God),
 How can he retain his senses ?
 These are the marks of Devotion
 in the path of Love, listen O
 disciple, says Sundarā *

तस्मिन्ननन्यता तद्विरोधिषूदासीनता च ॥९॥

9. Exclusiveness of feeling towards
 God and indifference to everything
 hostile to God is also called *Nirodha*.

Even when he is conscious of the
 external world, the devotee maintains

* न लाज तीन लोककी, न वेदको कह्यो करै ।
 न सक भूत-प्रेतकी, न देव-जच्छते डरै ॥
 सुनै न कान औरकी, द्रसै न और इच्छना ।
 कहै न बात औरकी, सुभक्ति प्रेमलच्छना ॥
 कवहुँक हँसि उठि नृत्य करै रोवन फिर लागे ।
 कवहुँक गदगद कठ, सबद निकसै नहि आगे ॥
 कवहुँक हृदै उमंग, बहुत ऊँचे सुर गावै ।
 कवहुँक है मुख मौन गगन-जैसो रहि जावै ॥
 चित्त-वित्त हरिसों लग्यो, सावधान कैसे रहै ।
 यह प्रेमलच्छना भक्ति है, शिष्य सुनो 'सुन्दर' कहै ॥

an attitude of exclusiveness towards his Beloved Lord and remains wholly indifferent towards activities that are repugnant to Him. Actions which are performed with such vigilance and care also come under the category of *Nirodha* (actionlessness) Every action performed by a devotee in the path of Love is agreeable to his Beloved Lord and is exclusively dedicated to His service. Action which is repugnant to Him is as impossible in his case as it is impossible for the sun to disseminate darkness, or for nectar to cause death.

अन्याश्रयाणां त्यागोऽनन्यता ॥१०॥

10. Exclusiveness consists in giving up dependence on everything else (than one's Beloved Lord).

The mind of the devotee in the path of Love does not even conceive the existence of any other object, how, then, will it seek, the shelter of any other person or thing? He looks upon the entire creation, both animate and

inanimate, as the external body of his Beloved Lord, he sees nothing else besides Him. Of a devoted wife Goswami Tulasidas says in his *Rāmacharita-mānasa*.—

“To the mind of a devoted wife of the foremost rank, no male other than her Lord exists even in dream.”*

The great Mohammedan saint-poet ‘Rahim’ (Abdur-Rahim Khan-i-Khana) says —

“The lovely form of the Beloved has settled in these eyes, there is no room left therein for any other beauty,
A traveller, says Rahim, will himself go away disappointed when he finds the inn packed to the full”†

The famous Hindi poet Deva has beautifully portrayed in the following immortal lines the mind of the Gopīs

* उत्तम के अस वस मन माहीं । सपनेहुँ आन पुरुष जग नाहीं ॥

† प्रीतम छवि नैनन वसी, परछवि कहाँ समाय ।

भरी सराय ‘रहीम’ लखि, आपु पथिक फिरि जाय ॥

which was so steeped in the Love of Śrī Kṛṣṇa that the whole of this objective world appeared to them dyed in the colour of their Beloved Lord —

“A fathomless ocean of ink welled
up all of a sudden,
And submerged all the three worlds
at a sweep
Like words in black ink written on
a piece of black paper,
Who is to discern and decipher
them, especially when the mind has
got deranged?
Darkness has enveloped the eyes
like the dark night of new moon,
A drop of water of the Jambū river*
has lost its identity in the waves
of the Jamūna,
O friend, my mind has gone thoroughly
out of control,
Having assumed the colour of Śyāma
(Śrī Kṛṣṇa) of swarthy form, it has
merged in the colour of Śyāma (and
therefore cannot be distinguished
from Him) ”†

* A celestial river whose waters are said
to be of bluish colour.

† औचक अगाध सिंधु स्याहीको उमड़ि आयो,
तामें तीनो लोक बूढ़ि गए एक संगमें ॥

If anyone comes and speaks to him about anyone else, he does not feel inclined to give ear to him, or such words do not enter his ears at all. If he is ever compelled to lend ear to such talk, the mind does not turn towards it. Before the marriage of Goddess Pārvatī, when the seven Ṛṣis pointing out the many defects of Lord Śiva persuaded Her to withdraw Her heart from the latter and offer it to Bhagavān Viṣṇu, who, they said, was the repository of all noble virtues, this very embodiment of the Love of Śiva (Pārvatī) gave the following memorable reply in the immortal words of Goswamī Tulasīdas —

“It is My persistent vow for crores of births that I shall either wed Śiva, or remain a virgin

कारे-कारे आखर लिखे जु कारे कागद सु,
 न्यारे करि वाँचै कौन, जाँचै चितभंगमें ॥
 आँखिनमें तिमिर अमावसकी रैन जिमि,
 जवूनद-बुद जमुना-जल-तरंगमें ॥
 यों ही मन मेरो मेरे कामको न रह्यो माई,
 स्यामरँग है करि समानो स्याम रंगमें ॥

Granted that Mahādeva is the repository of all vices, and Viṣṇu the repository of all virtues,
 But one who has his heart fixed on anyone will be satisfied with him
 and him alone '*
 —*Rāmacharitamānasa*.

The Gopīs also similarly said to Uddhava—

"O Uddhava, the heart is guided by its own choice.
 Leaving sweet fruits like grapes and dates, the insect bred in poison will feed on poisonous plants
 The *Chakora* bird (the Greek partridge) will throw away camphor, if the same is offered to it, and will be satisfied with embers
 The bee which pierces through the hardest wood will die rather than pierce the soft petal of the lotus
 The moth hugs the flame, knowing it to be its greatest friend.

* जनम कोटि लागि रगर हमारी ।

बरउँ संभु न तु रहउँ कुआरी ॥

महादेव अवगुन भवन विष्णु सकल गुन घाम ।

जेहि कर मन रम जाहि सन तेहि तेही सन काम ॥

He alone, says Surdas, proves
attractive to one who has engrossed
his mind!"*

Even so, the devotee in the path
of Love knows no one else than his
Beloved Lord whom he regards as his all-
in-all. He makes Him his sole refuge and
taking shelter under Him just as the
fish takes to the water, does everything
for his sake. Says Goswami Tulasidas:—

"He is my only support, my only
strength, my only hope, and the only
object of my faith,
The eyes of Tulasidas are rivetted
on Rāma and Rāma alone just as
the eyes of the Chāka bird are
fixed on the cloud"†

७ ऊँची मन मानेधी बात ।

दागलेपान यदि अमृततर्पयितोस विष गात ॥

जो चाहेमनो दे कपूर तोंड, तनि जगार अगात ।

मनुष कल पर कोरे काडमे, दैत कमजोर पान ॥

अो पाग दित जनि जानी दीपकनो लखान ।

मृदुल मन जसो तातो सोइ सुजन ॥

† एक भंगनो एक बड एक आम निगाम ।

एक रान अन्याम दित चारु तुलसीराम ॥

Like the *Chātaka* bird who is solely devoted to the cloud he has his heart fixed on God alone, it is on Him that he wholly and solely depends; nay, it is for Him and Him alone that he lives. All his activities including his recreation and rest, his movements, his dealings with others and even his beneficent acts, are meant for Him. Exclusive Love for God being the sole motive of all these activities, they are naturally propitious to all.

लोके वेदेषु तदनुकूलाचरणं तद्विरोधि-
षूदासीनता ॥११॥

II. To make one's activities, both secular and religious, conform to the will of God is what is meant by indifference to all that is antagonistic to God.

In the case of him who does everything exclusively for God, activities that are repugnant to God naturally drop off. He can never engage in any

action, whether enjoined by the Śrutis or Smṛtis, which is not agreeable to God, that is to say, which does not help in the growth of Divine Love

The conventional rules of society as well as the injunctions of the Vedas make it obligatory on the son to obey his parents, on the wife to obey her husband and on the disciple to obey his preceptor, but if the orders of the latter are prejudicial to the growth of Divine Love, the devotee in the path of Love refuses to carry them out, even if such refusal entails suffering on himself, for it is impossible for such a devotee to do anything which runs counter to the will of his beloved Lord

Citing some honourable instances of such refusal, Goswami Tulasidas says —

“One who has no love for Rāma
and Sitā,
Though dearest and nearest in
relation, should be renounced as
the worst enemy

Prahlāda renounced his father,
 Bibhīṣana his brother, Bharata his
 mother,
 Bali renounced his preceptor, and
 the Gopīs their husbands, and they
 are all remembered as benefactors
 of the world '*'

Prahlāda defied the commands of
 his father, which were directly opposed
 to God; Bibhīṣana deserted his brother;
 Bharata paid no heed to the orders of
 his mother Kaikeyī, King Bali turned
 deaf ears to the remonstrances of his
 preceptor Sukrāchārya, and the damsels
 of Vraja ignored the orders of their
 husbands. But they all contributed to
 the welfare of the world.

There are four types of *Karma*
 (Action). viz, (1) *Nitya* (of an obliga-
 tory nature), (2) *Naimittika* (incidental),
 (3) *Kāmya* (proceeding from desire)

* जाके प्रिय न राम बैदेही ।

तजिए ताहि कोटि बैरी सम जद्यपि परम सनेही ॥

पिता तज्यो प्रह्लाद, बिभीषन बंधु, भरत महतारी ।

बलि गुरु तज्यो, कत ब्रजवनितनि, भए जग मंगलकारी ॥

and (4) *Nisiddha* (prohibited). Of these prohibited (*Niṣiddha*) actions, such as theft, adultery, taking animal food and spirituous liquor should be abandoned by all. Actions which, though sanctioned by the Sāstras, are nevertheless performed with some desire, being conducive to bondage and involving an unending process of births and deaths, should also be eschewed according to the spirit of the Lord's own statement in the *Gītā* 'काम्यानां कर्मणा न्यास सन्यास कवयो विदुः' (Renunciation is declared by the wise to consist in relinquishing desire-born actions) As regards the two other forms of action, viz, *Nitya* (obligatory) and *Naimittika* (incidental), they should be performed in strict conformity with the procedure laid down in the Vedas and sanctioned by usage, without any attachment for the result and as a behest of God and with a view to pleasing Him That action alone which leads to the growth of Divine Love is conducive to His pleasure To act in harmony with God

through mind, speech and body, without attachment and without expectation of reward, as taught by the *Gītā*, and to desist from all activity which is repugnant to Him—is what is meant by indifference to antagonistic actions. Till the stage of madness through Love is reached, actions which are agreeable to God are performed as a matter of course by the devotee in the path of Love.

भवतु निश्चयदाढ्यादूर्ध्वं शास्त्ररक्षणम् ॥१२॥

12. The injunctions of the scriptures should be scrupulously respected, that is to say, actions which are agreeable to God and are enjoined by the scriptures should be diligently performed even after one has made up his mind (to attain that Divine Love which is beyond the province of ethics).

In the state of madness through Love, which is beyond the pale of ordinary laws of morality, and in which

there is no external consciousness, actions enjoined by the Vedas and sanctioned by the conventional rules of society automatically drop off, they are not deliberately given up

Therefore, till that state of absolute forgetfulness of external existence is reached, duties enjoined by the scriptures should never be shirked in the name of Divine Love. That supreme state of Love is reached through the continual performance of actions of the obligatory and incidental types that are agreeable to God according to the injunctions of the scriptures and in a spirit of dedication to God and through the practice of *Bhajana* in the shape of hearing and chanting the Names and glories of God. The Lord Himself emphatically says in the *Gītā* —

तस्माच्छास्त्र प्रमाण ते कार्याकार्यव्यवस्थितौ ।
ज्ञात्वा शास्त्रविधानोक्त कर्म कर्तुमिहार्हसि ॥

(XVI 24)

"For determining what you ought to do and what you ought not to do,

the scriptures are your only authority. Knowing this truth, you ought to act in this world in conformity with the injunctions of the scriptures."

अन्यथा पातित्याशङ्कया ॥१३॥

13. Otherwise there is risk of a fall.

He who deliberately violates the rules of conduct laid down by the scriptures, and acts arbitrarily in defiance of the scriptures and seeks to exonerate himself on the plea of Divine Love, is bound to fall in the scale of spiritual evolution. The Lord Himself says:—

यः शास्त्रविधिमुत्सृज्य वर्तते कामकारतः ।
न स सिद्धिमवाप्नोति न सुखं न परा गतिम् ॥

(*Gita* XVI. 23)

"He who ignores the injunctions of the scriptures and follows the promptings of desire can neither attain perfection, nor happiness, nor the supreme state."

To shirk deliberately duties laid down by the scriptures is not the ideal of devotional Love. Such renunciation

is a sign of delusion, and an arbitrary and licentious act and leads to demoniac wombs, suffering and hell

लोकोऽपि तावदेव किन्तु भोजनादिव्यापार-
स्त्वाशरीरधारणावधि ॥ १४ ॥

14. Worldly duties should also be scrupulously performed till there is consciousness of the external world; but (bodily) actions such as taking of food, etc., will continue to be performed till the body persists.

Side by side with religious duties, worldly duties such as attending to one's vocation in life and maintaining the family, etc., should also be carefully performed according to the injunctions of the scriptures and in conformity with the will of God Surely there is a stage when all activity, religious as well as mundane, drops off as a matter of course, but till that state is actually reached both these forms of duty must be scrupulously performed They will

drop off automatically when the time comes. But actions which are purely of a bodily type, such as taking of food, etc, will continue to be performed even in that state, for they are necessary for the maintenance of the body. Although the devotee who is wholly merged in the ecstasy of Love neither desires, nor makes any attempt to feed Himself, he takes food automatically through sheer force of habit when it is placed before him. Of course, this act of feeding, too, is an offering to God



Various Definitions of Divine Love with Examples.

तल्लक्षणानि वाच्यन्ते नानामतभेदात् ॥१५॥

15. Now we proceed to state the various definitions of *Bhakti* (Love) according to the different schools.

Different teachers have defined *Bhakti* in different ways After stating their views first, Devarsī Nārada will advance his own views in the matter

पूजादिष्वनुराग इति पाराशर्यः ॥१६॥

16. According to Vedavyasa, son of Parasara, *Bhakti* consists in attachment to worship of God and other allied practices.

The devotee should treat his body, mind and possessions as objects meant

only for the worship of God and should worship Him either in an Image or in the form of the external universe by means of all these objects with supreme reverence and in the prescribed manner. When the mind develops attachment for worship of God it will automatically withdraw itself from objects of the world which entangle the mind. Worship should be both external and internal or mental. Through worship of God the devotee may attain the supreme abode of God.—

श्रीविष्णोरर्चनं ये तु प्रकुर्वन्ति नरा भुवि ।
ते यान्ति शाश्वतं विष्णोरानन्द परमं पदम् ॥

(*Visnu-Rahasya*)

“People on this earth who perform worship of God Visnu attain the supreme, eternal and blissful abode of God ”

कथादिष्विति गर्गः ॥१७॥

17. According to Garga (another great apostle of *Bhakti*), *Bhakti* con-

sists in fondness for hearing the stories of the various sports of the Lord.

Engaging the mind in chanting and hearing the Names of the Lord, His glories and virtues and the stories of His divine sports is undoubtedly a main feature of *Bhakti*. The majority of people in this world consists of those who have nothing to do with God or His glories. They spend their lives in talking of worldly things day and night. They never engage in singing the praises of God nor do talks about God appear agreeable to them. As Goswami Tulasīdas says, "their ears have no attraction for the stories of Śrī Rāma" (श्रवणं न राम कथा अनुरागी). Such being the case with the majority of people, those whose mind remains constantly engaged in hearing or singing the praises of the Lord should certainly be classed as devotees. The author of the present aphorisms, Devarṣi Nārada, himself addressing Vedavyāsa on another occasion said —

"The sages have come to the positive conclusion that singing the praises of the Lord of sacred fame is the undying fruit of all austerities, study of the Vedas, performance of sacrifices and charities, muttering of sacred formulas and pursuit of Knowledge."*

In the *Rāmacharitamānasa* we read —

"Chanting of the stories of Rāma
drives away the impurities of *Kalā*
just as birds are scared away by the
clapping of hands,
For him who desires to cross the
ocean of worldly existence
The story of Rāma is like a stout
barge"†

Therefore, true attachment to the
stories of Śrī Hari is assuredly a mark

* इदं हि पुंसस्तपसः श्रुतस्य वा
स्विष्टस्य सूक्तस्य च बुद्धिदत्तयोः ।
अविच्युतोऽर्थः कविभिर्निरूपितो
यदुत्तमश्लोकगुणानुवर्णनम् ॥

(*Srīmad Bhagavata* I १ 22)

† रामकथा सुंदर करतारी । कलिमल बिहग उड़ावनिहारी ।
भवसागर चह पार जो जावा । रामकथा ता कहँ दढ़ नावा ॥

of Devotion, and Realization of God is bound to take place through this form of Devotion

आत्मरत्यविरोधेनेति शाण्डिल्यः ॥१८॥

18. According to Sandilya, another great exponent of *Bhakti*, the latter consists in supreme attachment to God, which is not opposed to love of Self.

Devotion to Self means delighting in the purest state of Self without any break or interruption, it is this state of eternal rejoicing in Self which is called Devotion by those who worship God in His unmanifest aspect Śrī Śankarāchārya says —

मोक्षकारणसामग्र्या भक्तिरेव गरीयसी ।

स्वस्वरूपानुसन्धान भक्तिरित्यभिधीयते ॥

“Devotion to God is the greatest of the factors contributory to emancipation And Devotion means quest for the Self ”

It is God Himself who exists as the soul in every being, therefore,

attachment to the Soul of the Universe is only another name for Devotion to God And those who practise such Devotion will doubtless attain salvation.

नारदस्तु तदर्पिताखिलाचारिता तद्विस्मरणे
परमव्याकुलतेति ॥१९॥

19. According to Narada, however, *Bhakti* consists in offering all activities to God and feeling supremely restless and miserable at the slightest lapse in remembrance of God.

Devarsi Nārada has no quarrel with the definitions of *Bhakti* given by Vyāsa, Garga and Śandilya. It is but meet and proper and necessary, too, to worship God, to sing praises of God and to love God as the soul of all It was the Devarsi himself who inspired Vyāsa to sing praises of God Therefore, it is not with a view to supplanting or pointing out the defects of the other definitions but to strengthen and supplement them that Devarsi

Nārada gives the above definition of *Bhakti* which covers them all and is complete in every way, saying that *Bhakti* in its comprehensive application means consecrating all one's activities (both secular and religious) to God, to practise ceaseless remembrance of God as the dearest object of one's heart and to feel uneasy and distracted when there is the slightest lapse therein Attachment to God's worship and to His stories, and Love of God Himself as the Soul of the Universe is included herein Among all types of Yogīs (practicants), it is the type conforming to this definition that the Lord declares to be the best in the *Gītā*.—

योगिनामपि सर्वेषां मद्भक्तेनान्तरात्मना ।

श्रद्धावान् भजते यो मां स मे युक्ततमो मतः ॥

(VI 47)

"Of all types of Yogīs, he is considered by Me to be the best who adoreth Me with reverence and with his inner self abiding in Me "

Again, the Lord says —

तस्मात् सर्वेषु कालेषु मामनुस्मर युध्य च ।

मय्यर्पितमनोबुद्धिर्मामिवैष्यस्यसंशयम् ॥

(Gita VIII 7)

“Therefore, O Arjuna, at all times (without interruption) think of Me alone and fight Offering thy mind and reason to Me, without doubt thou shalt come to Me ”

To be indifferent to honour and dishonour, gain and loss, victory and defeat, pleasure and pain, and other such dualities, to renounce all attachment and desire for fruit as well as the sense of ‘I’ and ‘mine’ in respect of the body and things relating to the body, to look upon God as the dearest object of one’s heart, nay, as the highest refuge, the supreme goal and one’s greatest friend and wellwisher; to remain absorbed in supreme Bliss while remembering with exclusive Devotion, deepest reverence and supreme Love the Name, Virtues, Glory, and Being (स्वरूप) of God without break, like the continuous flow of oil, and while absorbed in such thought to

perform all acts through the body, speech and mind for the sake of that dearest Lord alone and just as it pleases Him, in a thoroughly disinterested spirit, our only motive being to win His pleasure and contribute to His happiness, which is the supreme interest of a human being, and lastly, if through any reason there is even a moment's break in His thought and remembrance, to feel infinitely more restless than the fish out of water. This is the highest form of *Bhakti*.

A devotee in the path of Love, who has thus completely surrendered himself to God, will under no circumstance agree to give up remembrance of his dearest Lord even in exchange for salvation or non-return to this world, to say nothing of trifles like suzerainty over the three worlds. The Lord addresses the following words to Uddhava in praise of such devotees —

“O Uddhava, neither Brahmā, who is My own creation, nor Śankara, nor

Balarāma, nor Laksmī, nor even My own Self is so dear to Me as are devotees like you. To sanctify Myself with the dust of his feet, I constantly follow the footsteps of a devotee who has no worldly cravings, who is tranquil at heart, who has no quarrel with anyone, who beholds Me equally in all objects and who is constantly absorbed in My thoughts. The supreme Bliss of desirelessness enjoyed by those exalted souls who have their heart attached to Me, who having surrendered their all to Me have made themselves utterly destitute, who are tranquil at heart and kindly disposed towards all creatures because of their relation to Me and whose mind is completely free from all desires is known to no one else.'*

* न तथा मे प्रियतम आत्मयोनिर्न शङ्करः ।
 न च सङ्कर्षणो न श्रीर्नैवात्मा च यथा भवान् ॥
 निरपेक्षं मुनिं शान्तं निर्वैरं समदर्शनम् ।
 अनुव्रजाम्यहं नित्यं पूयेयेत्यङ्घ्रिरेणुभिः ॥
 निष्किञ्चना मय्यनुरक्तचेतसः
 शान्ता महान्तोऽखिलजीववत्सलाः ।
 कामैरनालब्धधियो जुषन्ति यत्
 तन्नैरपेक्ष्य न विदुः सुखं मम ॥

(*Srīmad Bhagavatā* XI xiv 15-17)

Bhakti as understood by Devarsi Nārada is exactly of this type. A devotee of this type will dedicate all his activities to God and, engaged in the ceaseless remembrance of God, will feel extremely restless and miserable when there is the least break in it.

अस्त्येवमेवम् ॥२०॥

20. It is exactly as described above.

In order to confirm the definition of *Bhakti* given above, the Devarsi has put in this aphorism which says *Bhakti* is exactly as described in the foregoing aphorism.

यथा व्रजगोपिकानाम् ॥२१॥

21. The Devotion of the Gopīs of Vraja may be taken as an example of this.

Having defined *Bhakti*, the Devarsi now cites the example of the Gopīs of blessed memory, the crest-jewels among the loving devotees of God. Such is, in fact, the greatness of the

Gopīs. No one on earth can adequately describe the Love of the Gopīs. Their mind, body and possessions and their welfare in this world as well as the next stood dedicated to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. It was Śrī Kṛṣṇa who kept their mind engrossed day and night, it was Śrī Kṛṣṇa, again, whose glories they constantly sang with their voices choked with emotion, and it was Śrī Kṛṣṇa whom they saw everywhere and at all times. Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself spoke to them as follows:—

"O Gopīs, you have broken the hard iron chains of household ties and clung to Me with Love. This act of yours is altogether blameless. I cannot repay this debt of yours by serving you even for the lifetime of a celestial being. You will please discharge Me from this liability out of your own generosity."*

* न पारयेऽहं निरवयसंयुजा
स्वसाधुकृत्यं विबुधायुपापि वः ।
या माभजन् दुर्जरगेहशृङ्खलाः
सवृश्च्य तद्वः प्रतियातु साधुना ॥

(*Srīmad Bhagavata* X xxxii 22)

While despatching Uddhava with His message to the Gopīs, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa paid the following tribute to the latter in a voice choked with emotion and with tears of Love trickling down His cheeks —

“O Uddhava, the Gopīs have offered their hearts to Me, I am their very life-breath, they have given up all the activities of their body for My sake I have to look after those who have laid down their worldly obligations for My sake The damsels of Gokula treat Me as dearer than the dearest object, and pining in separation from Me on account of My being away from them, they lose consciousness of the body when they send their thoughts to Me Without Me, they are somehow sustaining themselves with great difficulty on the messages of My return to Vraja They are one with Me and I am one with them ”*

* ता मन्मनस्का मत्प्राणा मदर्थे त्यक्तदैहिकाः ।
 ये त्यक्तलोकधर्माश्च मदर्थे तान् विभर्म्यहम् ॥
 मयि ताः प्रेयसा प्रेष्टे दूरस्थे गोकुलस्त्रियः ।
 स्मरन्त्योऽङ्ग विमुह्यन्ति विरहौत्कण्ठ्यविह्वलाः ॥

Uddhava went to Vraja and saw the condition of these Love-intoxicated Gopīs with his own eyes. He found that they saw Śrī Kṛṣṇa all around them, both inside and out. He heard from the lips of these Gopīs themselves.—

(1)

"There is no room left in our hearts !
How shall we accommodate anything
else therein when the heart is fully
occupied by the Darling of Nanda
(Śrī Kṛṣṇa).

While we are moving about or
looking round, whether we are awake
during the day or asleep at night,
That swarthy Form leaves not the
heart even for a single moment.
O Uddhava, you have made such
fine speeches and inculcated respect
for public opinion,
But what are we to do, when the
body is full to the brim with Love
the jar cannot contain the ocean

धारयन्त्यतिकृच्छ्रेण प्रायः प्राणान् कथञ्चन ।
प्रत्यागमनसन्देसैर्बल्लव्यो मे मदात्मिकाः ॥

(*Srīmad Bhagavatā* X, xlvī 4—6)

You ask us to get our ears cleft
 and twist our locks into clotted
 hair who will bear all this pain ?
 You advise us to give up the use
 of sandal paste and besmear our
 bodies with ashes, but don't you
 know we are burning with the fire
 of separation ?

He in whose quest the Yogis have
 strayed and wander still stays
 with us

Says Surdas, He is never disunited
 from us, not even for a moment,
 just as the shadow never leaves the
 substance '*'

The Gopīs said, "O Uddhava, go
 and initiate into *Yoga* those who are
 disunited with the Lord. Here, you see,

* ऊधौ ! जोग जोग हम नाही ।

अबला ग्यानसार कहा जानै, कैसे ध्यान धराहीं ॥

ते ये मूदन नैन कहत हौ, हरिमूरति जिन माहीं ।

ऐसी कथा कपट की मधुकर हम ते सुनी न जाहीं ॥

खवन चीर अरु जटा बँधावहु, ये दुख कौन समाहीं ।

चंदन तजि अँग भसम बतावत, बिरह-अनल अति दाहीं ॥

जोगी भरमत जेहि लगि भूले, सो तो है हम पाहीं ।

‘सूरदास’ सो न्यारो न पल-छिन, ज्यों घट ते परछाहीं ॥

there is eternal union Our beloved
Śyāma eternally stays with us" Uddhava
was now disillusioned, he was carried
away by the sweeping tide of the
spotless Love of the Gopīs —

"Hearing the words of the Gopīs
Uddhava forgot all canons of
decorum
Singing the praises of Gopāla (the
Divine Cowherd), he began to roam
in the bowers elated with joy
Now he prostrates himself at the
feet of the Gopīs, and acclaims
their Devotion,
And now he would run and embrace
the trees in the intoxication of that
Love"*

With a heart bent low with Devo-
tion, he said —

"In this world it is these Gopīs
alone who have attained the true

* सुनि गोपीके वैन नेम ऊधौके भूले ।
गावत गुन गोपाल फिरत कुजनमें फूले ॥
खिन गोपिनके पग परै, धन्य सोइ है नेम ।
धाइ-धाइ द्रुम भेटहीं, ऊधौ छाके प्रेम ॥

end of their life, for they have their hearts wholly devoted to Govinda, the Soul of the Universe, who is constantly being sought after by ascetics as well as mortals like us, obsessed by the fear of transmigration. In sooth, what need has he for the threefold birth of a Brahman (viz., physical birth, investiture with the sacred thread and initiation into sacrificial rites), who has developed attraction for the stories of the Lord? The rarest boon (of Love) that fell to the lot of the damsels of Vraja who during the *Rāsa* dance had the unique privilege of twining round their necks the arms of the Blessed Lord and thus had all their desires fulfilled, was neither obtained by Laksmī (the Goddess of Wealth) who stays permanently on the bosom of the Lord, nor by the celestial damsels who possess the grace and fragrance of a full-blown lotus, to say nothing of others. These blessed Gopīs renounced what is so difficult to renounce, viz., their own kith and kin and the path of noble women, and followed the footsteps of Mukunda (the Bestower of

Salvation), who is constantly being sought after by the Śrutis (Vedas) O what a rare privilege it would be if in my next birth I became either a creeper, herb or shrub in the woods of Brindaban so that I might be blessed with the dust of feet of these Gopīs!''*

The ladies of Mathura thus depicted the condition of the Gopīs, declaring their lives to be truly blessed —

* एताः पर तनुभृतो भुवि गोपवध्वो
 गोविन्द एव निखिलात्मनि रूढभावाः ।
 वाञ्छन्ति यद्भवभियो मुनयो वयं च
 किं ब्रह्मजन्मभिरनन्तकथारसस्य ॥
 नाय श्रियोऽङ्ग उ नितान्तरते. प्रसादः
 स्वर्गोपिता नलिनगन्धरुचा कुतोऽन्याः ।
 रासोत्सवेऽस्य भुजदण्डगृहीतकण्ठ-
 लब्धाशिपा य उदगाद् व्रजबल्लवीनाम् ॥
 आसामहो चरणरेणुजुषामह स्या
 वृन्दावने किमपि गुल्मलतौपधीनाम् ।
 या दुस्त्यज स्वजनमार्यपथ च हित्वा
 भेजुर्मुकुन्दपदवीं श्रुतिभिर्विमृग्याम् ॥

(*Srimad Bhagavata* X xlvii 58, 60—61)

"Blessed are the Gopīs who have fixed their hearts on Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who while attending to their various household duties such as milking the cows, threshing the paddy, churning the curds, brushing the courtyard and smearing it with cowdung, rocking crying babies in a cradle and lulling them to sleep, or sprinkling and sweeping the floor, sing songs in praise of Śrī Kṛṣṇa with a heart full of Love, with eyes wet with tears and in a voice choking with emotion"*

The greatness of the Gopīs cannot be exaggerated. There have been devotees in the sacred land of Vraja who renounced their all and longed to be transformed into a particle of dust in the lotus-feet of the Gopīs Truly has it been said —

"The Gopīs stand as the emblem of
Love,

* या दोहनेऽवहने मथनोपनेप-
प्रेक्षेक्षुनार्थरुदितोऽणमार्जनादौ ।
गायन्ति चैनमनुरक्तधियोऽश्रुकण्ठयो
धन्या व्रजत्रिय उरुमचिच्छयानाः ॥

(Śrīmad Bhagavata X 21/15)

They who won the heart of Śrī Kṛṣṇa by clasping His arms to their bosom '*'

Great apostles of Divine Love like Mahāprabhu Śrī Chaitanyadeva, who held aloft the banner of renunciation, have recognized the Gopīs as their guides in the Path of Love The celebrated devotee Nāgarīdaśa (who was some time the Ruler of the Kīṣkīṅgarh State) says —

“Praise be to goddesses like Lalitā who were so many sacred hymns of the Vedas incarnated in Vraja as milkmaids Beloved of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, they are always anxious to be of help in the sports of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa Intoxicated with the Love of the Divine Pair (Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa), embodiments of Bliss, reservoirs of Beauty, They cling to the Divine Pair like their very shadows through all their hours of joy

* गोपी प्रेम की धुजा ।

जिन घनस्याम किए बस अपने उर धरि स्यामभुजा ॥

The Gopīs are like crest-jewels among
saints who are free from envy,

The strong current of their spotless
Love swept away all barriers in the
shape of social conventions and rules
of decorum Those who sing praises
of the Bewitcher of hearts (Śrī Kṛṣṇa)
throwing off all barriers like this,
Why should they not attain the
supreme Bliss and joy of Divine
Love P''*

The glory of the Gopīs can be
appreciated to a certain extent only
when the practicant has made some
progress in the path of Love having
developed supreme dispassion towards
all objects of enjoyment of the world

तत्रापि न माहात्म्यज्ञानविस्मृत्यपवादः ॥२२॥

* ये हरिरम ओपी गोपी सब तिय तैं न्यारी ।
कमलनयन गोविदचदकी प्रानपियारी ॥
निरमत्सर जे सत तिनहि चूड़ामनि गोपी ।
निरमल प्रेम प्रवाह नकल मरजादा लोपी ॥
जे ऐसे मरजाद मेटि मोहनगुन गावैं ।
क्यों नहि परमानंद प्रेम-भगती-सुख पावैं ॥

22. Even in that state (of complete self-forgetfulness) there is no absence of the sense of the Divine glory (of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, in the Gopīs).

It means the Gopīs were fully aware of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's glory, secret and virtues. Some people are of opinion that in the realm of Love the sense of glory is absent. For they believe that Love cannot subsist where there is a sense of glory. But such was not the case with the Gopīs. Knowing Śrī Kṛṣṇa to be God Himself, the Supreme Puruṣa, the Gopīs regarded Him as the Beloved of their heart. Herein lies the main difference between Divine Love and earthly love. This is really what happens in Divine Love. Those who deny knowledge of the divinity of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the Gopīs are requested to read and ponder over the following extracts from *Śrīmad Bhāgavata*:—

“O Almighty Lord, it is not becoming of Thee to address such harsh words to us who have renounced everything

else and clung to the soles of Your sacred feet Therefore, O uncontrollable Lord ! pray accept us in the same way as the Primal Being, Śrī Nārāyaṇa, takes all seekers of salvation under His protection, and do not repudiate us O Hari, You know the secret of virtue (Is it not the greatest of virtues to take shelter under Your feet, being a knower of the secret of virtue, how dare You ask us return ? Can anyone who has taken refuge under Your blessed feet return therefrom ?) You told us just now that the prime duty of a woman was to serve her husband, children and other relations, let this homily remain with You, who are God Himself, the source of this moral instruction, and the fountain of all virtues, for You are the dearest friend and soul of all embodied creatures (including our husbands and children) O lotus-eyed Kṛṣṇa ! it has become impossible for us to stay anywhere else ever since we obtained the privilege of touching the soles of Your sacred feet, which even Śrī Lakṣmī (Goddess of Wealth) seldom enjoys the privilege of touch-

ing (in Your manifestation as Viṣṇu), and since You, who are so dear to the ascetics of the forest, gladdened our hearts. Even Lakṣmī, whose favourable looks are diligently sought even by other gods, having secured a permanent and undisputed place on Your bosom, seeks with Tulasī the dust of Your feet which other devotees are privileged to bear on their heads, we have without doubt taken refuge in that very dust of Your sacred feet You are the Primal Puruṣa, or *Paramātmā*, the protector of the Devas, who has come down on earth in a manifest form to remove the fear and suffering of Vraja.

"You are surely not the mere delighter (child) of Yaśodā. You are the Witness of (all that is going on in) the heart of all embodied beings. O Friend, at the invocation of Brahmā You have taken descent in the clan of Yādus for the protection of the entire universe."*

* मैवं विमोऽर्हति भवान् गदितुं नृशंस

सन्त्यज्य सर्वविषयांस्तव पादमूलम् ।

On the authority of these and other similar texts and on other grounds it is proved that the Gopīs surrendered themselves to Śrī Kṛṣṇa knowing Him to be God Himself, the embodiment of Truth, Consciousness and Bliss

भक्ता भजस्व दुरवग्रह मा त्यजास्मान्
 देवो यथादिपुरुषो भजते मुमुक्षुः ॥
 यत्पत्यपत्यसुहृदामनुवृत्तिरङ्ग
 स्त्रीणां स्वधर्म इति धर्मविदा त्वयोक्तम् ।
 अस्त्वेवमेतदुपदेशपदे त्वयीगे
 प्रेष्ठो भवास्तनुभृता किल बन्धुरात्मा ॥
 यर्ह्यम्बुजाक्ष तव पादतल रमाया
 दत्तक्षण क्वचिदरण्यजनप्रियस्य ।
 अस्मिन्म तत्प्रभृति नान्यसमक्षमङ्ग
 स्यातु त्वयाभिरमिता वत पारयामः ॥
 श्रीर्यत्पदाम्बुजरजश्चकमे तुलस्या
 लब्ध्वापि वक्षसि पदं किल भृत्यजुष्टम् ।
 यस्याः स्ववीक्षणकृतेऽन्यसुरप्रयास-
 स्तद्वद्वय च तव पादरजःप्रपन्नाः ॥

(X xxix 81 82, 86 87).

तद्विहीनं जाराणामिव ॥ २३ ॥

23. [Love that is] bereft of this knowledge (knowledge of Divine Glory) is of the same category as the love of a paramour.

Without a sense of Divine Glory, love of a woman directed towards a man becomes as disreputable as the love of a paramour. The Love which is accompanied by complete self-surrender, which is not tainted by a tinge of earthly interest, can be conceived only in relation to God. Love in relation to God, even though unaccompanied by

व्यक्तं भवान् ब्रजभयार्तिहरोऽभिजातो

देवो यथाऽऽदिपुरुषः सुरलोकगोप्ता ।

(X xxix 41)

न खलु गोपिकानन्दनो भवा-

नखिलदेहिनामन्तरात्मदृक् ॥

विखनसार्थितो विश्वगुप्तये

सख उदेयिवान् सात्वतां कुले ॥

(X. xxxi 4)

knowledge of His divinity, never goes in vain But love which is based on the knowledge that the object of Love is God Himself has some special virtues of its own What infinite joy we derive from the mere thought that God is our beloved Lord ! Then, how great and indescribable should be the joy of those who have actually realized God as the supreme object of their Love ! The Gopīs had the proud privilege of enjoying this stainless Divine Bliss It was therefore that the great sage Śukadeva, who was himself a liberated soul, related this sacred story of Divine Love to Emperor Parikṣit, who was awaiting his death on the bank of the Ganges. This also goes to prove that the Love of the Gopīs was saturated with the knowledge of Divine Glory and was purest in character

नास्त्येव तस्मिंस्तत्सुखसुखित्वम् ॥ २४ ॥

24. In that love (the love of a paramour) there is no deriving of joy from the joy of the beloved.

A lustful lover loves his paramour only for his own pleasure, for the gratification of his own senses; he does not derive joy from the joy of his beloved. The Love of the Gopīs was not of this type. In earthly love, which is born of lust, the beloved is the paramour, and the desire for physical contact is present therein. In the case of the Gopīs, however, the Beloved was God Himself, the Soul of the Universe, and there was no desire for physical contact lurking anywhere in their hearts. The Gopīs merely sought the pleasure of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Whatever they possessed—their body, mind, intellect, physical charm, youth, wealth and life itself—stood offered to Śrī Kṛṣṇa for His worship. They sought to make Śrī Kṛṣṇa happy by offering their all to Him. They considered it their sacred duty to do whatever they thought would bring delight to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. They derived supreme joy from this act of service. They had no idea of any other form of enjoyment, much less would

they seek such enjoyment Herein lies the difference between Love and sensuality. Sensuality seeks gratification through others, whereas Love seeks to make the Beloved happy, and to derive joy from the joy of the latter While describing the Love of the Gopīs the author of the *Chaitanya-Charitāmṛta* correctly says —

“The desire for gratification of one's own senses is called *Kāma* (sensuality), whereas the desire for gratifying the senses of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is known by the name of *Prema* (Love) The object of *Kāma* is self-gratification, while *Prema* has the happiness of Kṛṣṇa for its object The Gopī cares not for her own happiness or otherwise, the happiness of Kṛṣṇa is the motive of all her activities Worldly duties and religious obligations, and functions of the body and other activities, sense of decorum, patience, comfort of body and essence of the bliss of Self, renouncing all these, she takes to the worship of Kṛṣṇa It is for the happiness of Kṛṣṇa (and not for her own happiness) that she pursues the path of Love

This is what they call strong attachment for Krishna, it is as stainless as a clean washed piece of cloth. Thus, there is a world of difference between *Love* and *Prema*. *Love* is pitch darkness, *Prema* is the brilliance of the sun in a cloudless sky. There is no trace of sensuality in the Gopis. The happiness of Krishna is the only motive of their contact with Him**.

- * एतन्मैत्र्य प्रीतिरस्य, नाना नाम काम ।
 हर्षप्रियार्थं हि न प्रेम नाम ॥
 कामे नार्यं निःसंशय वेदतः ।
 प्रणम्य नार्यं प्रेम नो प्रयत ॥
 अतः प्रेमया युक्तं मीमांसा ना को विनातः ।
 हर्षप्रियार्थं हि न प्रेम नाम ॥
 प्रेमार्थं प्रेमार्थं प्रेमार्थं कर्म ।
 नाना प्रीतिः प्रेमार्थं, नानाप्रकारं कामं ॥
 मयं नाना प्रीतिः को प्रीतिः मयम् ।
 प्रणम्य नार्यं प्रेम नो प्रयत ॥
 हर्षप्रियार्थं हि न प्रेम नाम ॥
 प्रेमार्थं प्रेमार्थं प्रेमार्थं कर्म ।
 नाना प्रीतिः प्रेमार्थं, नानाप्रकारं कामं ॥

Surrender of all their possessions to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the feeling of supreme restlessness in forgetting Śrī Kṛṣṇa even for a moment, right knowledge about Śrī Kṛṣṇa's greatness and glory and rejoicing in the happiness of Śrī Kṛṣṇa—these are the four dominating features in the Love of the Gopīs for Śrī Kṛṣṇa

This Love of the Gopīs is extremely pure and transcendent May Śrī Kṛṣṇa take pity on those who scent sin or adultery therein



अतएव काम प्रेमे बहुत अतर ।
काम अधतम प्रेम निर्मल भास्कर ॥
अतएव गोपीगणे नाहि कामगध ।
कृष्णसुखहेतुमात्र कृष्णेर सम्बन्ध ॥

Devotional Love is an End in Itself.

सा तु कर्मज्ञानयोगेभ्योऽप्यधिकतरा ॥२५॥

25. This (Devotional Love) is superior even to *Karma* (Action), *Jnana* (Knowledge) and *Yoga*.

Karma, *Jñāna* and *Yoga*—all these three are equally conducive to God-Realization, but *Bhakti* (Devotion) is superior to them all. In the former, the caste, order and spiritual capacity of the practicant have to be considered, and they are also attended with the risk of a fall, whereas in true Devotion there is no such risk as the practicant receives the fullest support and help from God. Moreover, the path of Devotion is open to all alike, irrespective of caste, creed or sex. Goswami Tulasidas says:—

"They who shun the path of Devotion,
 though knowing it to be such, and
 take great pains over the attainment
 of Wisdom alone, are as stupid as
 the man who leaving the proverbial
 cow, which yields whatever we
 seek therefrom, wander in quest of
 the sun-plant (*Ak*) for the sake of milk.
 Those who, leaving the path of
 Devotion to Śrī Haṁ, seek to derive
 happiness through other means, O
 chief of birds, are as thick-headed
 as the fool who seeks to swim across
 the ocean without the help of a barque
 O Umā, the practice of *Yoga*, *Japa*
 (muttering of sacred formulas),
 charity and austerities, and various
 kinds of sacrifices and other rites
 and observances evoke not the Divine
 as surely and fully as does unalloyed
 Love O Garuḍa, there is no better
 form of *Bhajana* (worship) than
 cultivation of Love
 Realizing this, the sages engage in
 repeatedly chanting the glories
 of God '*

—*Ramacharitamānasa*

* जे अस्मि भगति जानि परिहरहीं ।

केवल ग्यान हेतु भ्रम करहीं ॥

The Lord Himself says —

“Yogic practices, wisdom, Righteousness, austerities, renunciation and the study of scriptures do not captivate Me as easily and completely as does unflinching Devotion to Me I, the beloved Self of saints and holy men, may be conquered only through reverence and Devotion. Devotion to Me purifies the heart of even low-born persons such as a Chāndāla (pariah) ”*

ते जड़ कामधेनु ग्रह त्यागी ।

खोजत आक फिरहि पय लागी ॥

सुनु खगेस हरिभगति बिहाई ।

जे सुख चाहिं आन उपाई ॥

ते सठ महासिंधु विनु तरनी ।

पाँड़ि पार चाहि जड़ करनी ॥

उमा जोग जप दान तप नाना व्रत मख नेम ।

राम कृपा नहि करहि तसि जसि निष्केवल प्रेम ॥

पन्नगारि सुनु प्रेम सम भजन न दूसर आन ।

यह विनारि मुनि पुनि पुनि करत राम गुन गान ॥

* न साधयति मां योगो न साख्यं घर्म उद्धव ।

न स्वाध्यायस्तपस्त्यागो यथा भक्तिर्ममोर्जिता ॥

The Lord also says in the *Gītā* —

“I cannot be perceived, O Arjuna, in the Form in which you have seen Me through the study of the Vedas, or through the practice of austerities, charity and sacrifices O subduer of foes, I can be perceived in this way, known in essence and entered into only through exclusive Love” (XI 53-54)*

फलरूपत्वात् ॥ २६ ॥

26. For this (Devotional Love) is an end in itself.

The type of Devotional Love described above is an end in itself, it is not a means to an end. The Devotion which is recognized as a means to the

भक्त्याहमेकया ग्राह्यः श्रद्धयाऽऽत्मा प्रियः सताम् ।
भक्तिः पुनाति मन्निष्ठा श्रवणकानपि सम्भवात् ॥

* नाह वेदैर्न तपसा न दानेन न चेज्यया ।
शक्य एवविधो द्रष्टु दृष्टवानसि मा यथा ॥
भक्त्या त्वनन्यया शक्य अहमेवविधोऽर्जुन ।
ज्ञातु द्रष्टु च तत्त्वेन प्रवेष्टु च परतप ॥

attainment of Wisdom is an auxiliary form of Devotion. It falls under the category of ordinary worship, it is not the highest manifestation of Devotion characterized as Love. This Love is the end or culmination of all disciplines

“Undertaking pilgrimages, and undergoing disciplines such as the practice of Yoga and cultivation of dispassion and wisdom, Varieties of *Karma* (religious rites), practices and observances, self-control, vows of various kinds, compassion towards all beings, service of one's Preceptor and the Brahmans as a class, cultivation of learning with humility and height of wisdom

These and other disciplines described at length in the Vedas, Devotion to Śrī Hari is the end of them all ”*

* तीर्थाटन साधन समुदाई । जोग बिराग ग्यान निपुनाई ॥
नाना करम धरम ब्रत नाना । संजम नेम ग्यान बिग्याना ॥
भूतदया गुरु द्विज सेवकाई । बिद्या बिनय बिबेक बड़ाई ॥
जहँ लगि साधन वेद बखानी । सब कर फल हरिभगति भवानी ॥

ईश्वरस्याप्यभिमानद्वेषित्वाद् दैन्यप्रिय-
त्वाच्च ॥ २७ ॥

27. God, too, has an aversion for pride and loves humility.

Practicants treading the paths of *Karma*, *Jñāna* and *Yoga* are liable to get proud of their own power and the tenacity of their discipline, while God bears, among others, the designation of 'दर्पहारी' (humbler of pride) In fact, God has no hatred or partiality for anyone, all are equal in His eyes, He delivers all Of course, the methods of deliverance are different in different cases He delivers the haughty and proud through chastisement, and the meek and humble devotees through hearty and affectionate caresses. That is why even the wrath of God has been declared as a blessing He assumes the role of an enemy in respect of the proud and the haughty, and that of a loving friend in relation to the meek and the humble. That is

why He is called by such Names as 'Friend of the humble', 'Shelter of the shelterless', 'Wealth of the poor' and so on. In reality, however, His heart is full of Love even for the proud, it is therefore that He humbles the pride of the latter. Says Goswami Tulasidas—

"It is a part of Śrī Rāma's nature that He does not allow, pride to grow in His devotees, Pride which is the cause of worldly bondage and brings suffering of various kinds, And which is the root of all sorrow. It is therefore that the All-merciful Lord (Śrī Rāma) removes it, For He has deep affection for His devotees"*

—*Ramacharitamansa*

Notwithstanding all this, the fact cannot be denied that there is show of hatred in all punishment, but the

* सुनहु राम कर सहज सुभाऊ । जन अभिमान न राखहिं काऊ ॥
संस्तुति मूल सुलप्रद नाना । सकल सोक दायक अभिमाना ॥
तेहि तैं करहिं कृपानिधि दूरी । सेवक पर ममता अति रुरी ॥

meek and humble He clasps to His bosom. He feels no hesitation in performing the meanest service for the meek devotee; whereas the devotee on his part naturally deems himself to be the humble servant of God. He prays to the Lord thus —

"O Lord, thou art the sole refuge of this humble soul, who knows no *Sādhana* (discipline), and who is completely under the thumb of *Māyā* (illusion) and loaded with sins"*

"Where shall I go leaving Thy
sacred feet ?
Who else is known in the world as
a redeemer of the fallen ?
Who is excessively fond of the meek
and the humble ?"†

This humility is different from that state of privation in which a man suffering from want of money, honour

* सर्वसाधनहीनस्य पराधीनस्य सर्वथा ।
पापपीनस्य दीनस्य कृष्ण एव गतिर्मम ॥

† जाऊँ कहाँ तजि चरन तिहारे ।
काको नाम पतितपावन जग, केहि अति दीन पियारे ॥

and worldly glory, etc., pants for obtaining them. It denotes that absence of pride and egoism which even the greatest and mightiest of emperors may possess through the grace of God. This humility consists in the total annihilation of pride and the feeling of doership—in the recognition of the fact that there is no such thing as 'I' and 'Mine'; all that exists is God, everything belongs to God, all that happens, happens through His power and inspiration; He alone is the doer and the dictator both.

But true humility as described above, which is so dear to God, is not easy of attainment. True humility does not appear so long as one is not completely exorcised of the devil of pride. Pride of birth, nationality, wealth, honour, learning, spiritual discipline, health, etc., and the sense of doership do not allow humility to appear, out of hypocrisy one may make an external show of humility, he may call himself humble before God; he may assume the

role of weeping; but his humility will be tested only when he can maintain it in a natural form even on the acquisition of the greatest of worldly possessions and means of spiritual advancement. He who not only tolerates being publicly denounced as a sinner and a wretch by others lower in rank than himself, but takes such condemnation to be deserved and feels delighted to hear it and who is always pining for a vision of God—it is such humble and contrite souls that are loved by God. In true Devotion there is no room for the pride of one's own efforts or spiritual discipline, that is how the path of Devotion is superior to all other paths

तस्या ज्ञानमेव साधनमित्येके ॥ २८ ॥

28. Some (thinkers) are of opinion that *Jnana* (spiritual Knowledge) is the only means to attain that (Love or Devotion).

It is no doubt true that *Bhakti* must be preceded by the Knowledge that the

But herein it is not necessary to pursue a course of discipline leading to a knowledge of the identity of the Universal Spirit with the individual soul. Devotion to God may be developed through mere faith and reverence. Jatāyu, the chief of vultures, the lord of elephants, prince Dhruva, Śabarī, the Bhīla lady, and other Puranic characters realized God through mere Devotion of the type described above

अन्योन्याश्रयत्वमित्यन्ये ॥ २९ ॥

29. According to others, *Bhakti* (Devotion) and *Jnana* (Knowledge) are inter-dependent.

This is also true in certain cases. Through practice of the secondary (गौणो) type of Devotion, the Truth about God is realized, and through a realization of this Truth one is able to develop excessive fondness for the Lord. But lovers of *Bhakti* alone do not care for this view. For they know that when Devotion of the nature of Love appears

in its fully developed form, nothing remains within his Knowledge as a separate entity. The lover and the Beloved become one ! Who, then, will know about whom ?

स्वयं फलरूपतेति ब्रह्मकुमाराः* ॥ ३० ॥

30. According to the sons of Brahma (Sanatkumara and his brothers, and Narada), *Bhakti* is an end in itself.

Therefore, *Bhakti* is both a means and an end. It is both the root and fruit of the tree of spirituality True devotees practise Devotion for its own sake. For it is an end in itself It cannot be attained through particular *Sādhana* (course of discipline), nor is there anything superior to it for the realization of which it may be used as a means Says Goswami Tulasidas —

“*Bhakti* is self-sufficient and is dependent on no other *Sādhana*.”

* Some read it as ‘ब्रह्मकुमार.’ ।

Knowledge and wisdom are subordinate to it '*

—Ramacharitamansa

राजगृहभोजनादिषु तथैव दृष्टत्वात् ॥ ३१ ॥

31. This is corroborated by the examples of the royal palace and meals, etc.

These examples have been taken to show how Devotion is an end in itself

न तेन राजपरितोषः क्षुधाशान्तिर्वा ॥ ३२ ॥

32. It (the mere Knowledge of the ins and outs of a palace) does not help us to win the favour of the king (who occupies it), nor does it (the mere knowledge of a particular kind of food) help us to satisfy our hunger.

The knowledge of a palace derived from mere hearsay will not do Suppose

* सो स्वतत्र अवलं न आना ।

तेहि आधीन ग्यान विग्याना ॥

we have also come to know that the king is a God-fearing man, a powerful potentate and a great well-wisher of his subjects, and that he possesses a handsome appearance and a number of virtues and excellencies of character. But what of that? We shall not be able to please the king with the mere knowledge of these facts. We may likewise come to know that a particular food preparation possesses a sweet and delicious flavour, and we may also come to know the ingredients of which it is made; but all this knowledge will not satisfy our hunger. Even so mere verbal knowledge of God will not secure His pleasure, nor will it bring peace to our soul. Although it is true that all are equal in the eyes of God, His pleasure can be secured only through Devotion. He Himself says in the *Gītā*—

समोऽहं सर्वभूतेषु न मे द्वेष्योऽस्ति न प्रियः ।
ये भजन्ति तु मां भक्त्या मयि ते तेषु चाप्यहम् ॥

“I am equally present in all creatures,
there is none hateful or dear to Me.

Nevertheless they who worship Me
through Devotion abide in Me, and
I abide in them "

तस्मात्सैव ग्राह्या मुमुक्षुभिः ॥ ३३ ॥

33. Therefore, they who seek
liberation (from worldly bondage) must
adopt the path of Devotion.

Devotion not only cuts asunder the
bonds of our worldly existence without
any difficulty, it attracts God Himself
who becomes the object of our Love and
carries on His Divine sports with us

Says Goswami Tulasidas.—

"The supreme state of final emancipa-
tion or absolution is very difficult to

attain

Such is the verdict of saints, the
Purānas, the Vedas and the Śāstras

alike

That very salvation thrusts itself
upon the devotee of Rāma

unsolicited '*'

—*Ramacharitamansa*

* अति दुर्लभ कैवल्य परम पद ।

सत पुरान निगम आगम चद्र ॥

This supremely rare boon of salvation which is not easy to attain even through the pursuit of the severest of disciplines forces itself on the devotee unsolicited, but the devotee 'gives it a cold shoulder, being covetous of Devotion'*

He does not even care to look at it. There is no reason why one should take to any other discipline, leaving this supreme state of *Bhakti* which is at the same time so easy to attain. Those who possess reverence and wisdom should, therefore, practise Devotion and Devotion alone.



राम भजत सोइ मुक्ति गोसाईं ।

अनइच्छित आवइ वरिआई ॥

* मुक्ति निरादर भगति लुभाने ॥

Practice of Divine Love: Glory of Satsanga.

तस्याः साधनानि गायन्त्याचार्याः ॥३४॥

34. The Acharyas (Teachers and Prophets) have described the methods of practice of Devotional Love.

Having established the superiority of *Bhakti* (Devotion) over *Karma* (Action) and *Jñāna* (Knowledge), Devarsī Nārada now proceeds to describe the different methods of practice of Devotion as sung and shown by saints and prophets, who are Masters of the path and have initiated the path of Devotion

तत्तु विषयत्यागात् सङ्गत्यागाच्च ॥३५॥

35. That (practice of Devotion) is realized through renunciation of worldly objects and worldly attachment.

The stream of Love flows naturally through every heart, because the *Jiva* is eternally a part of the totality of Consciousness, or God, the embodiment of Supreme Bliss and Supreme Love. But that Love being directed to worldly objects, the flow has become vitiated. That is why Love has been transformed into lust, which produces only sorrow. That is why (ordinarily) there is no manifestation of the Divine or Godward aspect of Love. In order to bring out this aspect of Love, it is necessary to turn its direction from the world towards God. There are two methods of doing this—(1) renunciation of worldly objects as such; and (2) renunciation of attachment for worldly objects. Those who hold that Devotion may be gained even while they are attached to worldly objects, or even while they are engaged more and more in the accumulation and enjoyment of worldly objects, are labouring under a delusion. When the spirit of Devotion is developed, there remains nothing in the world for enjoy-

ment When none remains as the enjoyer, how can there be existence of objects of enjoyment ? When God becomes the sole enjoyer, and the devotee with the whole of his body, senses and possessions becomes the object of enjoyment of God, God is, then, realized as the sole *Puruṣa* (Male), and all the rest *Prakṛti* (Female), of whom He is the enjoyer At this stage (of realization), the devotee cannot maintain for himself any object of enjoyment. If anyone desires to escape from this position by saying that it indicates a very high state of spiritual existence, he will nevertheless have to practise to the best of his capacity, progressive renunciation of objects of enjoyment as well as attachment for such objects When the body is absorbed in enjoyment, or the mind is attached to worldly objects, how will one practise, with that very body and mind, service to beloved God ? That is why renunciation of worldly objects is a *sine qua non* of Devotion. What to speak of physical

enjoyment, even the very thought of such enjoyment has to be given up; for it is a psychological law that the attachment of the mind will grow for an object it meditates upon. The Lord says in the *Bhāgavata*:—

“Through meditation on worldly objects the mind gets attached to worldly objects, but through repeated remembrance of Me, the mind gets dissolved in Me ”*

Wherever you fix the mind, it will get attached there. This fixing has to be done through the senses. The kind of sight we repeatedly see, the words we hear, the food we take, the object we smell and touch—the mind will revolve round them, and the more it revolves upon an object, the more it develops attachment for it. If we attend the theatre and hear music from harlots, the mind will get attracted to this; similarly, if we attend a performance

* विषयान् ध्यायतश्चित्तं विषयेषु विषजते ।

मामनुस्मरतश्चित्तं मय्येव प्रविलीयते ॥

representing the lives and activities of devotees, and hear *Kirtana*, the mind will be attracted towards them. Therefore, he who aspires to make any progress in the path of Devotion should renounce all objects that are adverse to God. The renunciation of worldly objects mentioned by this aphorism truly means renunciation of objects which tend to draw the mind away from God and drag it towards objects of enjoyment, towards this ephemeral world. The body and mind should be ardently engaged in, and thirst should be increased for, activities like meditation, remembrance of God, *Kirtana*, worship, service of holy men and *Satsanga*, etc. Worldly objects whose acquirement or enjoyment is absolutely necessary for maintenance of the body or of dependent relations, may be acquired or enjoyed to the extent they are indispensable, but that also should be done under the control of the scriptures taking that to be the command of God, without any desire

for results, and with the object only of earning the pleasure of God. Objects enjoyed like this are known to be as good as their renunciation. On the other hand, when an object is renounced and yet there is mental craving for it, the renunciation is not true renunciation. That is why the aphorism mentions that with the renunciation of an object it is necessary to renounce the attachment for it. In the *Mahābhārata* it is stated.—

त्यागः स्नेहस्य यत्यागो विषयाणा तथैव च ।

(*Santi-Parva* 192 17)

“True renunciation means renunciation of objects of enjoyment as well as the attachment for them ”

It is through this form of renunciation that the craving of the mind for enjoyment will be overcome. A mind thus freed from all cravings for enjoyment can alone become the receptacle for holding Divine Love. On the realization of Divine Love, renunciation of objects of enjoyment comes

as a matter of course. The *Rāma-charitamānasa* says—

"The fortunate soul whose heart is attached to Śrī Rāma gives up the wealth and glory of the world like the vomit"*

Why should one who has tasted the nectar, and has profited by it, any more cast a longing look towards poison? But renunciation of the poisonous objects of enjoyment is necessary even for acquirement of the nectar—for accelerating the heart's movement towards it. Supreme Bliss lies' in renunciation of objects of enjoyment and developing attachment for God in their stead. The Lord says —

मय्यर्पितात्मनः सभ्य निरपेक्षस्य सर्वतः ।

मयाऽऽत्मना सुख यत्तत्कुतः स्याद्विप्रयात्मनाम् ॥

(*Śrīmad Bhagavata* XI xiv 12)

"How can those whose hearts are attached to worldly objects enjoy the happiness which the devotee

* रमा विलास राम अनुरागी । तजत वमन इव नर बद्धभागी ॥

enjoys through Me, the soul or self (of all)—the devotee whose heart is centred on Me alone, and who has given up all dependence on worldly objects "

अव्यावृत्तभजनात् ॥ ३६ ॥

36. Through ceaseless *Bhajana* (success is attained in the practice of Devotion).

Bhajana (worship) is the primary factor in the practice of Devotion, this is both a discipline and the goal For one who has attained Divine Love, ceaseless, uninterrupted *Bhajana* becomes natural; and one who aspires to develop Divine Love should begin to practise ceaseless *Bhajana*. He who seeks either salvation or Divine Love without the practice of *Bhajana* is under a delusion. Goswami Tulasidasji says:—

"Butter may be rather churned out of water, and oil may be pressed out of sand, but without *Bhajana* none can cross over the ocean of births

and re-births, this truth is unshakable.'*
— — — — —

Therefore, the practice of *Bhajana* is indispensable. It has, again, a special value and significance so far as the practisant following the path of Devotion is concerned. If after withdrawing the mind from worldly objects, it is not fixed on God, it is bound to return with velocity to worldly objects. Renunciation of worldly objects is *Vairāgya* (dispassion), and *Bhajana* is *Abhyāsa* (practice). Through dispassion and practice, Divine Love in its purest form is attained. The *Bhajana* which is irregular, which has no continuity, which is practised one day and abandoned the next, is not ceaseless *Bhajana* based on Love or reverence. Success is attained only in the *Bhajana* which continues without any break, and which is governed by the sentiment of reverence. In his *Aphorisms on Yoga*, Maharṣi Patañjali says —

* वारि मयें घृत होइ चरु सिकता तें चरु तेल ।
विनु हरिमजन न भवतरिअ यह सिद्धात अपेल ॥

स तु दीर्घकालनैरन्तर्यसत्कारासेवितो दृढभूमिः ।

(I 14)

"Practice becomes rooted when it is ceaselessly carried on with reverence for a length of time "

Realization of God becomes easy through such ceaseless remembrance of God. The Lord Himself says in the *Gītā*:—

अनन्यचेताः सततं यो मा स्मरति नित्यशः ।
तस्याह सुलभः पार्थ नित्ययुक्तस्य योगिनः ॥

(VIII. 14)

"O Arjuna, he who constantly thinks of Me, without any other thought, I am easily reached by that Yogi, who is thus ceaselessly attached to Me "

Therefore, all activities of the body—eating, bathing and performance of other daily duties—should be carried on simultaneously with unbroken remembrance of God. Because of the background of Divine remembrance every one of these activities will be trans-

formed into an act of worship (*Bhajana*). There should be thus not a moment's break in the thread of continuous *Bhajana*. If remembrance of the Divine Form is not always possible, let the Divine Name be remembered. Through remembrance of the Name, the mind and the vital airs will be purified, and this purification will develop exclusive Love for the lotus-feet of God. The easiest method of the practice of the *Japa* of Divine Name is to fix the mind on the breath and mentally utter the Name along with the incoming and outgoing breath. There may be slow oral utterance together with the mental utterance. This *Japa* may be practised under all circumstances whether the practicant is walking or seated, or engaged in any other activity. When the practice is consolidated, the mind will get over all distractions and will automatically engage itself in continuous remembrance of God. Almost all the famous saints and devotees have made use of this practice. Mahātma Charanadas says —

"When *Japa* is performed through the breath, all doubts cease to exist."*

Similarly, Kabir says:—

"Remember (God) through every breath, this is, indeed the best of methods"†

God's Form, glory, secrets, qualities, sports and Name—all this should be remembered, and the remembrance should be like the ceaseless flow of oil This is ceaseless, uninterrupted *Bhajana*.

लोकेऽपि भगवद्गुणश्रवणकीर्तनात् ॥ ३७ ॥

37. Even in society, when God's glory is heard and recited (practice of Devotion is promoted).

The mind should, no doubt, be engaged in constant remembrance of God; but when in the midst of other people, let the ears and the voice be engaged only in hearing and uttering

* स्वासा माहीं जपे ते दुबिधा रहै न कोय ।

† साँस साँस सुमिरन करौ, यह उपाय अति नीक ॥

the glory of God. The effort of the mind to practise constant remembrance of God will succeed when the senses are engaged in activities connected with God. Most of human activities are based on hearing and speaking. If the ears hear only talks about worldly things, or the voice gives utterance to worldly thoughts, it should be regarded as almost impossible for the mind to succeed in the remembrance of God. But if the ears and voice are attached to God, and they find no time to do anything else, then the other senses and the mind will themselves become devoted to God. Therefore, the ears and lips should be always occupied in hearing or singing the Name, glory or sports of God. This is how the object of life may be realized. The realization of life does not lie in mere living, breathing, eating or procreating. If that were so, does not the tree live? Do not the bellows take in air? Do not beasts eat and procreate? That is why the *Bhāgavata* says:—

"He through whose passage of the ears the Name and glory of God have not entered, that sub-human creature in the shape of man is worse than a dog, a swine, a camel or an ass O Sūta, the ears that do not hear the stories of the sports of God are like holes in earth where snakes dwell, the tongue that does not sing the praises of God is as useless as the tongue of a croaking frog"*

(II iii 19-20)

Goswami Tulasidas recorded this very sentiment in his *Rāmacharita-mānasa*.—

"The cavities of ears that do not hear the glories of God are like the dwelling-place of snakes,
The tongue of him who does not sing the praises of Rāma is like the tongue of a frog"†

* श्वविड्वराहोष्ट्रखरैः संस्तुतः पुरुषः पशुः ।

न यत्कर्णपथोपेतो जातु नाम गदाग्रजः ॥

बिले बतोरुक्रमविक्रमान् ये न शृण्वतः कर्णपुटे नरस्य ।

जिह्वासती दार्दुरिकेव सूत न चोपगायत्युरुगायगाथाः ॥

† जिन्ह हरिकथा सुनी नहिं काना । श्रवन रंध्र अहिभवन समाना ॥

जो नहिं करहिं राम गुन गाना । जीह सो दादुर जीह समाना ॥

In the conclusion of the *Bhāgavata* it is stated—

“Words which instead of expressing the glories of God express only low, worldly thoughts are unreal, fruitless words. Words which reveal the glories of God, which describe the praises of God, it is such words that are real, propitious, virtuous, sweet and tasteful, it is such words that eternally acquire newer and newer flavour, it is such words that give supreme joy to the mind and dry up the ocean of man's sorrow.”*

(XII xii 49-49)

Therefore, the ears should be engaged in hearing the Names and glory of God, and the tongue in the *Kīrtana* of the Divine Name. Divine Love in its purest, unadulterated form is manifested through this practice.

* मृषा गिरस्ता ह्यसतीरसत्कथा न कथ्यते यद्भगवानधोक्षजः ।
तदेव सत्यं तद्गुह्यं तदेव मङ्गलं तदेव पुण्यं भगवद्गुणोदयम् ॥
तदेव रम्यं रुचिरं नव नवं तदेव शश्वन्मनसो महोत्सवम् ।
तदेव शोकार्णवशोपणं नृणां यदुत्तमं लोकांश्चोऽनुगीयते ॥

Again, it is recorded in the *Bhāgavata*:—

"The Lord said,—He who fixes his mind on Me, and hears, sings and praises the stories of My Name, glory, and sports develops exclusive Devotion to Me."* (XI. xxvi. 29)

"Śrī Śukādeva said—O King, the person who with reverence sings of the birth and activities of God, the Lord of all Devas, gets absolved from all sins. Man attains Supreme Devotion to God, which is attainable only by Paramahansas, through hearing and singing of the sweet and blessed stories of God's descent on earth, His Power and the sports of His childhood"† (XI xxxi 27-28)

* ता ये शृण्वन्ति गायन्ति ह्यनुमोदन्ति चादृताः ।

मत्पराः श्रद्धधानाश्च भक्तिं विन्दन्ति ते मयि ॥

† य एतद्देवदेवस्य विष्णोः कर्माणि जन्म च ।

कीर्तयेच्छ्रद्धया मर्त्यः सर्वपापैः प्रमुच्यते ॥

इत्थं हरेर्भगवतो रुचिरावतार-

वीर्याणि बालचरितानि च शान्तमानि ।

अन्यत्र चेह च श्रुतानि गृणन्मनुष्यो

भक्तिं परा परमहंसगतौ लभेत ॥

"The Lord said—the pious soul who has gained Devotion to Me, the repository of infinite qualities, who am *Brahma*—the consolidated Form of *Sat*, *Chit* and *Ánanda* (Existence, Knowledge and Bliss), what other object remains to be attained by him ? That is, he has attained everything else " * (XI xxvi. 30)

The hearing and *Kīrtana* of the Divine Name possess the greatest of virtues. The space through which the sound of the Name reverberates gets purified. He who can utter the Name with his last breath is bound to reach the supreme state irrespective of the sentiment through which it is uttered. The emissaries of Yama (God of Death) cannot enter the place where the Divine Name is sung. Therefore, it is the bounden duty of all to practise the *Japa* and

* भक्ति लब्धवतः साधोः किमन्यदवशिष्यते ।

मय्यनन्तगुणे ब्रह्मण्यानन्दानुभवात्मनि ॥

Kīrtana of the Name avoiding the ten sins against the Name.*

The *Bhāgavata* says.—

“Utterance of the Divine Name even through its association with the names of children, or in jest, or through indifference and contempt

* The ten sins against the Name are (1) Censure of saints and holy men, (2) Discrimination between the different Names of God, (3) Insult of the Preceptor, (4) Censure of the scriptures, (5) To regard the power of the Name described in the scriptures as exaggerated praise, (6) To commit sin under the shelter of the Name, (7) To compare the merit of the Name with the merits derived from charity, sacrifices, fasts and other religious practices; (8) To advise irreverent, unwilling souls to practise the Name, (9) Not to accept the Name even after hearing its glory, (10) To remain attached to pride, fascination of the world and objects of enjoyment.

destroys all sins The Name, taken either knowingly or unknowingly, burns up sin just as fuel thrown into a fire is burnt up '* (VI ii 14, 18)

The glory of the Divine Name has been sung by all scriptures and all saints. The following verse of the *Bhāgavata* is worthy of being thought over. Devī Devahūti, addressing Kapiladeva, says:—

“He whose tongue bears Thy Name is, indeed, the best of souls, even if he is a *Chāṇḍāla* (pariah) by birth, for he who performs the *Kirtana* of Thy Name derives the merit of all austerities, of all *Yajñas* (sacrifices), of bath in all sacred waters and of study of the *Vedas* ”† (III xxiii 7)

* साङ्केत्य पारिहास्य वा स्तोम हेलनमेव वा ।
 वेकुण्ठनामग्रहणमग्रेपाषहर विदुः ॥
 अज्ञानादयवा शानाद्भुत्तमश्लोकनाम यत् ।
 सङ्कीर्तितमघ पुंसो दहेदेधो यथानलः ॥

† अहो वत श्वपचोऽतो गरीयान् यज्जिह्वाग्रे वर्तते नाम तुभ्यम् ।
 तेपुस्तपस्ते जुहुवुः सस्तुरार्या ब्रह्मानूचुर्नाम गृणन्ति ये ते ॥

Again,

"A person involuntarily shouting 'हरये नमः' (adoration to Hari) when he either slips, falls from a height, sneezes, or suffers from sorrow, is released from all his sins Just as the sun removes the darkness of mountain caves, just as the powerful wind cuts up a heavy cloud and forces it to disappear, even so the *Kirtana* of the Divine Name, or Divine Glory, entering the heart, brings all sorrow to an end"* (XII xii 46-47)

This is the result of uttering the Name unconsciously and mechanically But when it is uttered with reverence, how great and noble should be the result ? That is why Tulasidasji says:—

"God's Name when uttered even mechanically burns up the accumulated sins of many births,

* पतितः स्वलितश्चार्तः क्षुत्वा वा विवशोऽब्रुवन् ।

हरये नम इत्युच्चैर्मुच्यते सर्वपातकात् ॥

सङ्कीर्त्यमानो भगवाननन्तः श्रुतानुभावो व्यसनं हि पुंसाम् ।

प्रविश्य चित्तविधुनोत्यशेषं यथा तमोऽर्कोऽभ्रमिवातिवातः ॥

The devotee who chants His Name with reverence crosses the ocean of metempsychosis as easily as one steps over the water held in the hoof-mark of a cow."*

Therefore, the constant practice of *Kirtana*, hearing and remembrance of the Name, Glory and Power of God is undoubtedly the best and supreme method for the attainment of Devotion.

मुख्यतस्तु महत्कृपयैव भगवत्कृपालेशाद्वा
॥ ३८ ॥

38. But the primary means (of attaining Divine Love) is grace of Mahapurushas (great souls, who have attained Divine Love), or even an iota of Divine grace.

After pointing out the need for renunciation of worldly objects and attachment for such objects on the

* विवसहुँ जासु नाम नर कहहीं । जनम अनेक सँचित अघ दहहीं ॥
सादर सुमिरन जे नर करहीं । भव वारिधि गोपद इव तरहीं ॥

one hand, and pursuing ceaseless *Bhajana*, and hearing and *Kīrtana* of the glory and Name of God, on the other, another means is now mentioned which is so effectual that once this is attained the other practices follow as a matter of course. This is the grace of a *Mahāpuruṣa* (great soul). The *Mahāpuruṣa* is by nature gracious, but it is very difficult to follow him with faith and reverence. Through the association of a *Mahāpuruṣa*, the devotee is automatically cured of the attraction for worldly objects. In his company he gets the privilege of hearing and singing the Names of God; and what is constantly heard and seen is bound to make an impression on the mind. This is how remembrance of God becomes easy and natural for him. It has, however, to be borne in mind that the *Mahāpuruṣa* whose very grace is said to be sufficient to bless one with Divine Love is not one who possesses mere knowledge of the scriptures, or bears an ideal conduct;

he is one who has realized God, he is a devotee who has developed this Love himself. The glory of such a Love-intoxicated devotee is very great That is why the R̥ṣis, who were masters of *Karma-kāṇḍa*, whose bodies had been soiled with the smoke rising from sacrificial pits, addressing Sūta, who was doling out the nectar of Divine Glory to them, said—

“O gentle Sūta, not to speak of smaller achievements like attainment of heaven, the value of even a moment's contact with associates of God, who possess this Love, cannot be compared to even salvation, which destroys re-birth Earthly possessions like sovereignty, etc., cannot even be mentioned for this comparison”*

(*Bhagavata* I xviii 18)

Echoing this very thought the *Rāmacharitamānasa* says.—

• तुलयां लब्धेनापि न स्वर्गं नापुनर्भवम् ।

भगवत्सङ्गिसङ्गस्य मर्त्यानां किमुताशिषः ॥

"O brother, if we place the pleasure
of heaven and the bliss of salvation
on one side of the scale;
All that pleasure combined cannot
equal in weight the bliss of a
moment's *Satsanga*."*

Here the glory is sung not of the *Satsanga*, which through purification of the heart leads one to salvation. For the couplet points out that it is improper to compare the joy of salvation to even a moment's *Satsanga* of this type. *Satsanga* here means the *Sanga* (association) of the devotee who having realized God has renounced *Moksha* (salvation) itself because of his absorption in the Love of God; it means the association of an eternal partner in the sports of the Lord, the repository of all Divine Glory and all Love, who can bless the *Jiva* not only with salvation, but can endow him with *Bhakti* in the form of Divine Love. *Moksha* (salvation) is not sought after by a Lover of God. On

* तात स्वर्ग अपवर्ग सुख धरिअ तुल्य एक अंग ।

तूल न ताहि सकल मिलि जो सुख लव सतसंग॥

the contrary, he denounces the desire for *Mukti* (salvation) as an evil desire, which is an obstacle to the growth of Divine Love. He who gains the grace of such a Lover of God and earns the privilege of his association, easily succeeds in captivating the Lord Himself—the Lord who cannot be captivated through *Yoga*, *Jñāna* and other practices. That is why the Lord Himself, addressing His friend and associate Uddhava, said —

“O Uddhava, *Yoga*, *Jñāna* (Knowledge), practice of *Dharma*, study of the Vedas, practice of austerities, renunciation, performance of sacrifices and works of public utility, such as, the excavation of wells, tanks, etc., offering sacrificial fees, observance of fasts, undertaking pilgrimages, self-restraint, observing religious rules—all this cannot captivate Me. But I am easily captivated through *Satsanga*, which uproots all worldly attachments.”*

(*Bhagavata* XI xii 1-2)

* न रोधयति मा योगो न साख्यं धर्म उद्धव ।

न स्वाध्यायस्तपस्त्यागो नेष्टापूर्ते न दक्षिणा ॥

The reason for this is that the other disciplines when pursued with interested motives bring earthly or heavenly enjoyment, and when pursued disinterestedly purify the heart and bring salvation. The only discipline that captivates God Himself, the Divine Sporter, is pure, exclusive Love, which is altogether independent, and which cannot be attained by any of the disciplines mentioned above. It is only through the supreme grace of the Love-intoxicated devotee, who is a partner in the sports of the Lord, that this Love can be attained. Says Goswami Tulasidas:—

“*Bhakti*, which is independent and the repository of all happiness cannot be attained by the *Jiva* without *Satsanga* ”*

व्रतानि यश्चछन्दांसि तीर्थानि नियमा यमाः ।

यथावरुन्धे सत्सङ्गः सर्वसङ्गापहो हि माम् ॥

* भगति सुतंत्र सकल सुख खानी ।

बिनु सतसंग न पावहिं प्राणी ॥

But if God wills it, He can endow a soul with this Love; even an iota of His grace can bring the gift of this Love. Goswami Tulasidas again says—

"There is no Lord more compassionate than Śrī Rāma, through even an iota of whose grace a vicious soul like Tulasidas attained supreme rest (Peace) "*
(Peace) " *

But even this iota of Divine grace, which is being eternally showered on us, can be obtained by the *Jīva* only through the grace of Mahātmās, who are in direct communion with God. Therefore, the association of Love-intoxicated saints is the best and surest method of attaining Divine Love. Such association, however, cannot be obtained merely for the asking. That is why in the next aphorism Devarṣi Nārada describes this association as scarce and rare.

* जाकी कृपा लवऱेस तेँ मतिमंद तुलसीदासहूँ ।
पायो परम विधाम राम समान प्रभु नाहौँ कहूँ ॥

39. But contact with Mahapurushas is scarce, difficult to attain and yet unfailing in its effect.

In this world, it is very difficult to obtain the contact of a soul who is devoted to the duties pertaining to his station in life, whose conduct is righteous, whose nature is saintly, and who possesses the divine virtues. Like the genuine diamond true virtuous souls are scarce among fraternities of so-called holy men and religious instructors, but on a careful search it is not altogether impossible to discover persons who may be regarded as righteous, who are masters of ritual, and even Jñānīs (enlightened souls). But the Mahātmā whose very grace can bring one the gift of Divine Love, which is eagerly sought after by Yogīs and Jñānīs alike is very, very scarce. That is why the contact with such Mahātmās is regarded as very rare. It is difficult to recognize

such a Mahātmā even if one happens to meet him. For even a hypocrite or an actor can to a certain extent assume the external behaviour of a Mahātmā. To shed tears, to weep, to laugh and to shout are not the only signs of a Lover of God. There may be many external causes through which these outward expressions may appear. Moreover, there may be true Lovers of God who have gone beyond the stage which is marked by these expressions, but whose external conduct is beyond the ken of ordinary people. True Lovers of God will never ask others to recognize them as such. Moreover, who will give this recognition for the asking? That is why it is very difficult to recognize such a desireless Divine Lover. That is why he is described as 'scarce'. But the blessed contact with such a Mahātmā made even unknowingly will not go in vain, because it is unfailing in its effect. When the association of an ordinary holy man, who is virtuous and learned, brings purification of the heart and removes

all sin, all fever and fret and spiritual poverty, the contact with Mahātmās whose heart overflows with Divine Love, who are embodiments of Bliss and Love, whose remembrance alone destroys sin, will never fail to produce its benign effect

Just as a man gone to sleep when the night was darkest and continuing to sleep even after sunrise cannot see the light until he is awake, although the world is flooded with light as soon as the sun rises, just as a man of wealth legally transfers his property to a poor man whom he loves and the poor man immediately becomes wealthy; but not knowing that the account had been transferred to him, he continues to imagine himself to be poor, similarly, even the unconscious contact of a Lover of God dispels darkness in the form of sin and ignorance, reveals the sun of Knowledge and confers the incomparable gift of Divine Love, but unless and until one comes to know of it, he remains ignorant of the gift, and fails to derive joy from

it. But he does not remain ignorant of this state for any appreciable length of time. That is why the contact with a great soul has been described as unfailing in its effect

लभ्यतेऽपि तत्कृपयैव ॥४०॥

40. The contact (with Mahapurushas) becomes possible through His (God's) grace.

It is doubtless true that contact with a saint, who answers the above description, is obtained only through the grace of God. He whom God desires to draw unto Him, to him God sends His Lover, who possesses the power to bind down God to himself, nay, who has identified himself with God. In fact, divine grace and contact with a Lover of God are mutually interdependent. Without this contact, divine grace cannot be felt and recognized, and without grace, the contact does not take place. Śrī Bibhīṣana felt this grace when he met the great

devotee, Śrī Hanumān. That is why he said:—

"O Hanumān, I have now gathered hope Without the grace of Hari contact with a saint cannot take place."*

तस्मिंस्तज्जने भेदाभावात् ॥४१॥

41. Between God and His devotee, there is no difference.

The devotee is none other than God Himself (ब्रह्मविद् ब्रह्मैव भवति) He who serves a devotee, serves God Himself. The devotee resides in the heart of God, and God resides in the heart of the devotee. The Lord Himself says in the *Bhāgavata* —

"Devotees are My heart, and I am the heart of devotees They know nobody else than I, and I know nobody else than they"†

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* अब मोहि भा भरोस हनुमता ।

बिनु हरिकृपा मिलहिं नहिं संता ॥

† साधवो हृदयं मह्यं साधूनां हृदयं त्वहम् ।

मदन्यत्ते न जानन्ति नाहं तेभ्यो मनागपि ॥

Śrī Bharata chants the Name of
Śrī Rāma, and Śrī Rāma chants the
Name of Śrī Bharata —

"Is there such a Lover of Śrī Rāma
as Bharata ? The entire world chants
Śrī Rāma's Name, but Śrī Rāma
chants Bharata's Name " *

Referring to the Gopīs, the Lord
says —

"O Arjuna, My glory, My worship,
faith in Me, and the secret thoughts
of My heart, are known only to the
Gopīs, none else knows them " †

What difference can there be between
such a Lover of God and God Himself ?
The Lord says "He who worships Me
through Love resides in Me, and I
reside in him." ‡

* भरत सरिस को राम सनेही ।

जगु जप राम रामु जप जेही ॥

† मन्माहात्म्य मत्सपर्यो मच्छ्रद्धा मन्मनोगतम् ।

जानन्ति गोपिकाः पार्थ नान्ये जानन्ति तत्त्वतः ॥

‡ ये भजन्ति तु मा भक्त्या मयि ते तेषु चाप्यहम् ॥

Such a Lover gets so much absorbed in God that he loses all consciousness of his external form and begins to feel only the Form of God. In the course of their search for the Lord the Gopīs lost themselves so much in the Lord that they began to imitate His sports. Says Nandadas:—

“They imitated the various sports of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Enchanter, the Darling, the sweet Lover. They wholly lost themselves, and knew not who they were.”*

तदेव साध्यतां तदेव साध्यताम् ॥ ४२ ॥

42. Therefore, cultivate this, cultivate this (contact with the Lover of God).

If you desire to be blessed with Divine Love, crave with all your heart for the contact of a *Mahāpuruṣa* (great soul), who is a Lover of God. Through divine grace such contact will

* मोहन लाल रसाल की लीला इनहीं सोहै ।
केवल तन्मय भई कछु न जानैं हम को हैं ॥

be obtained, it will relieve you of all sins and woes and bestow on you the boon of Divine Love. There is a beautiful mystery about this. Imagine the existence of a powerful monarch, who is also a great Lover. Love, however, cannot be cultivated with everyone. In his Court and throughout the kingdom, the monarch can give a free demonstration of his power and glory, but he cannot reveal the secret of his Love to anybody. We, as his subjects, can obtain his interview according to the conventional rules, and can speak to him so long as and in the manner permitted by those rules. We cannot openly ask him about the secret of his Love, nor can he himself reveal the same to us. If the secret of that Love is to be known, if we desire to enter the realm of his Love, we shall have to seek the association of a lover of the king, who is exclusively devoted to the king, who has no relation with the king except that of personal love (love which is beyond

the realm of the State) and with whom he openly discusses love topics. We shall have to earn the confidence of the lover, who will then reveal to us all the mystery of the king's love. We shall have to convey our message of love to the king through this lover and shall have to establish our eligibility before him. When the king will find us eligible, he will give us permission to enter the inner ring of lovers. Similarly, God does not reveal the secret of His Love through His own lips. He sent Uddhava to the Gopīs to take the lesson of Divine Love at their feet. Just as the most confidential friends of the sweet-heart gather from her and her alone the mystery of the love of her lover as well as her secret experiences with him, similarly the aspirant gathers the secret of Divine Love from the devotee who is a Lover himself. This secret is gained by the soul who is found to be eligible and before whom God desires to reveal the mystery of His

Love A Lover of God cannot reveal that mystery before anyone without the will and permission of God In the first instance, the aspirant has to acquire eligibility When the desire grows intense in his mind for attaining this pure, elevated Love, his heart begins to pine and wail for it That cry of anguish of the heart is heard by God, who dwells within the heart of everyone, God, then, either directs or prompts a Divine Lover to approach the aspirant. There the eligibility of the aspirant is tested If his Love is found to be disinterested and exclusive, if the aspirant can earn the confidence of the devotee through his conduct, then the latter will carry his message to God and begin to reveal before him the mystery of Divine Love according to the direction of God Thus, step by step, the more his eligibility grows the more secrets will be revealed to him, and finally the full grace of God will descend on him and he will come to possess Divine Love himself. The King

and his lover, having no access to the heart of others, might be deceived by a show of false love; but God, or the devotee deputed by Him, can never be deceived. Therefore, he who seeks to gain divine Love must first acquire eligibility for that Love through a careful practice of the methods described by Devarsi Nārada, so that he may be a subject of divine grace and may be regarded as qualified to associate with Lovers of God *Pari Passu* he must intensely develop the desire for the company of Lovers of God, because without their company it is extremely difficult to gain divine Love. Although such Lovers are fully qualified for salvation in the sense of attainment of identity with God, the latter does not give them salvation, because He has to propagate the message of His Love through them, nor do such Lovers entertain any desire for salvation which will deprive them of the enjoyment of the Love-sports of the Lord. Although freed souls themselves, they come to

or reside in the world only for doling out divine Love. Their compassion is unconditioned. If the desire grows intense within us, then through the grace and direction of God, they will certainly bless us with the gift of divine Love through their holy sight, touch and speech and through their grace. They are constantly on the lookout for souls who are eligible for the gift of Love. It is their very mission to dole out divine Love. Therefore, gain by all means the company of these Lovers of God and crave for their grace!



Evil Company—the Main Obstacle to Devotional Love.

दुःसङ्गः सर्वथैव त्याज्यः ॥ ४३ ॥

43. Evil company should be totally eschewed.

After describing the glory of *Satsanga* (association with spiritual souls) the Devarsi now forbids evil company. Just as *Satsanga* promotes love for hearing stories of divine sports and discussing things relating to God, practice of the Divine Name, attachment to God, respect for the scriptures, right thinking, dispassion, good habits, the spirit of service, artlessness, humility, endurance, purity of body, mind and conduct, compassion, spirit of non-injury to others, truthfulness, continence, equa-

bility of temper and absence of pride, etc., and thereby transforms even an ordinary man into a virtuous man and a great devotee, even so, the reverse of it, that is, evil company promotes sin and makes a man grossly sensuous and worldly-minded, because in that company he hears only talks of worldly enjoyments and other worldly matters and vilification of others, and acquires love of pleasure, develops immorality, licentiousness, lack of wisdom, voluptuousness, vicious habits, desire for honour, pride, hypocrisy, arrogance, anger, intolerance, impurity, callousness, violence, mendacity, sensuality, and a turbulent spirit. All the disreputable features of the demoniacal nature develop and grow through evil company. It stifles all the virtues of man and brings his life to ruin. It was the evil company of Mantharā which made Kaikeyī, otherwise a gentle, noble and loving soul, a source of utter grief to her husband, King Daśaratha, to her own son, Bharata, and to the whole kingdom of Ayodhyā, and ultimately

brought on her the curse of widowhood, and the prolonged displeasure of her dearly loved son, Bharata. The evil influence of Śakuni was one of the main causes of the terrible destruction of human lives during the great *Mahābhārata* war. In the *Bhāgavata*, Lord Kapiladeva gives the following valuable advice to His mother Devahūti:—

"He who associates with evil-minded men, who are given to the gratification of their carnal desires, and walks in their footsteps, goes like the latter to the dark regions of hell. Evil company takes away all virtues such as veracity, purity, compassion, thoughtfulness, wisdom, shyness, forgiveness, control of mind, control of the senses, etc., and robs one of his wealth, prosperity and fame. Therefore, the company of evil men, that is, men who are agitated in mind, stupid and devoid of intelligence and who are mere playthings in the hands of women, should never be resorted to."*

* यद्यसद्भिः पथि पुनः शिश्रोदरकृतोद्यमैः ।

आस्थितो रमते जन्तुस्तमो विशति पूर्ववत् ॥

Thus, although it is equally necessary for all to avoid evil company, it is doubly so for the aspirant who seeks Love of God. Bhagavān Śrī Rāmachandra, addressing Bibhīṣana, said, "O Bibhīṣana, one had better live in hell, but let not God throw him into the company of evil men."* Evil company should not be taken to mean the company of immoral men alone. Any object of the senses which is likely to induce evil thoughts and the desire for sensuous enjoyment in our mind or to lead the mind away from the path of God-Realization, may constitute evil company for us. We should never behold any object, animate or inanimate, nor hear or indulge in any talk, nor visit

सत्य शौच दया मौन बुद्धिः श्रीर्हीर्यशः क्षमा ।
 शमो दमो भगश्चेति सत्सङ्गाद्याति संक्षयम् ॥
 तेज्वशान्तेषु मूढेषु खण्डितात्मस्वसाधुषु ।
 सङ्ग न कुर्याच्छोच्येषु योषित्क्रीडामृगेषु च ॥

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* वरु भल वास नरक कर ताता ।
 दुष्ट संग जनि देह बिधाता ॥

any place, nor read any book or periodical, nor look at any picture, nor eat, smell or touch anything, nor entertain any idea which may fill our mind with thoughts of enjoyment. Let us remember that the following ten are the main factors contributory to the appearance and growth of both good and evil impulses in man—(1) locality, (2) food, (3) water, (4) family, (5) surroundings, (6) environment, (7) literature, (8) topics of discussion, (9) vocation, and (10) form of worship. If all these are Sattvic (pure) by nature, our association with them will lead to the growth of purity and virtue. If, on the contrary, they are Rajasic and Tamasic by nature, their association will constitute evil company. Such association will lead to the growth of ignorance and will spread evil all around. Therefore, evil company should be wholly and completely eschewed.

कामक्रोधमोहस्मृतिभ्रंशबुद्धिनाशसर्वनाश-
कारणत्वात् ॥४४॥

44. For that (evil company) breeds
lust, anger, infatuation, loss of memory,
loss of wisdom and total ruin.

To think of worldly objects, which
bring momentary gratification to the senses
at the time of their enjoyment, rather
than of God and His mysteries and
sports, is the root cause of all mischief
The mind gets attached to the object
on which it dwells constantly, or most
of the time. Evil company, that is,
association with objects of enjoyment,
or contact with worldly-minded people
through body, speech, or mind naturally
develops our attachment to worldly
enjoyments Attachment gives rise to
desire. This desire is the root of all
sin. Desire, when satisfied, begets greed
for more, and, when unsatisfied, it takes
the form of anger. It is therefore that
Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the *Gītā* declares
desire, which He says is an offspring
of *Rajas*, attachment, to be mainly
responsible for the commission of sin.
Arjuna put the following question to

Śrī Kṛṣṇa: "What is it that drags a man, as if by force, to commit sin, even though he is not willing to do so?" In reply to this question, the Lord explicitly says:—

"It is desire, which appears also as wrath *born of Rajoguna*, it is not easily satisfied, it is grossly sinful in nature, know thou this to be man's foe on earth '*"

Though desire begets both greed and anger, only a fraction of man's desires is satisfied in this world, and the rest remain unsatisfied. Failure produces anger; and anger, in its turn, brings about loss of discrimination. In anger one loses all sense of what is good and what is evil, and like a malevolent spirit attempts only to destroy. This insensibility brings about loss of memory, and loss of memory brings in its turn loss of reason. Loss of reason drags him

* काम एष क्रोध एष रजोगुणसमुद्भवः ।

महाशनो महापाप्मा विद्ध्येनमिह वैरिणम् ॥

(III 37)

away from the path of virtue, wherein lies his ultimate good both in this world and the next, and brings about his ruin. This very idea has been enunciated by the Lord in the *Gītā*, Chapter II verses 62-63, wherein He says.—

“By dwelling on the objects of the senses, one develops attachment for them, attachment gives birth to desire, desire begets anger (when the desire is thwarted) Anger gives rise to infatuation, infatuation brings about loss of memory, loss of memory in its turn brings loss of reason, and loss of reason leads ultimately to ruin ”*

Association with worldly objects and contact with worldly-minded people is mainly responsible for our dwelling on objects of the senses, which brings about the ruin of man. This is exactly what

* ध्यायतो विषयान् पुंसः सङ्गस्तेषूपजायते ।
 सङ्गात्सञ्जायते कामः कामात्क्रोधोऽभिजायते ॥
 क्रोधान्द्रवति समोहः संमोहात्स्मृतिविभ्रमः ।
 स्मृतिभ्रंशाद् बुद्धिनाशो बुद्धिनाशात्प्रणश्यति ॥

is meant by evil company. This should be totally eschewed.

तरङ्गायिता अपीमे सङ्गात्समुद्रायन्ति ॥४५॥

45. These (lust, anger, etc.), though appearing in the form of a ripple in the beginning, later assume the dimension of an ocean (through evil company).

Man should be afraid of even faint traces of evil till they are completely obliterated. Just as fire under a load of ashes may be fanned by air into a huge flame, similarly suppressed evil may be revived through evil company and may assume a huge dimension. Lust and anger, when they appear in the mind, appear only as ripples, but through evil company they grow into an ocean and occupy the whole heart. They block up all the openings through which wisdom or reason may enter, and thus ruin is the inevitable result. None should, therefore, imagine that the impulses of virtue within him are stronger than the impulses of evil,

and that therefore he can never be contaminated by evil. On the contrary, he should always, and at every moment, take the utmost care to give up association with evil.



Who Crosses Over Maya ?

कस्तरति कस्तरति मायाम् ? यः सङ्गांस्त्यजति,
यो महानुभावं सेवते, निर्ममो भवति ॥४६॥

46. Who is it, who is it that crosses over *Maya* (which is so difficult to cross) ? He who renounces all attachments, who serves great souls and who does not regard anything as his own.

The most essential thing to do for one who seeks to swim across a river is to strike his hands and feet against the water, he has constantly to proceed against and push his way through the water That is how a novice in the art of swimming can cross a river. The moment he gives up the process of striking against the water, he is sure to

the river of *Māyā*. Truly speaking, the aspirant who enjoys the privilege of serving a saint does not require to swim at all; he crosses it without any effort of his own through the grace of the saint, which serves as a stout barge to ferry him across. It is therefore that the Devarsi advises all aspirants to take to the service of saints

In the *Bhāgavata* the Lord says —

“Like a stout barge for those who are drowning in water, saints who have realized God and have attained Peace serve as the supreme refuge for those who are plunged in the terrible ocean of worldly existence”*

Through service of saints, who are always gracious, all sin, worldly attachments and the fever and fret of the world are easily got rid of.—

“Just as resort to the God of Fire removes cold, fear and darkness,

* निमज्ज्योन्मज्जतां घोरे भवान्धौ परमायनम् ।

सन्तो ब्रह्मविदः शान्ता नौर्ददेवाप्सु मज्जताम् ॥

(XI xxvi 32)

have surrendered their all to God and claim nothing as their own '*

Sage Bharata, addressing King Rahūgaṇa, said —

“O Rahūgaṇa ! divine knowledge and Love of God cannot be attained through austere penance, sacrifices, charity, benevolent acts done while in the family, study of the Vedas or worship of the gods of Water and Fire and the Sun-god. It can be attained only by bathing the body with the dust of the feet of saints, that is, through the service of their feet ”†

It has, however, to be remembered that service of saints does not simply mean living in their company or rendering them bodily service. Of

* नैषा मतिस्तावदुरुक्रमाङ्घ्रि स्पृशत्यनर्थापगमो यदर्थः ।
महीयसां पादरजोऽभिषेकं निष्किञ्चनानां न वृणीत यावत् ॥

(VII v 32)

† रहूगणैतत्तपसा न याति न चेज्यया निर्वपणाद् गृहाद्वा ।
न च्छन्दसा नैव जलाग्निसूर्यैर्विना महत्पादरजोऽभिषेकम् ॥

(V xii 12)

these objects of my-ness as full of sorrow, transient and born of Ignorance, the feeling of my-ness with regard to them should be totally given up. It should be recognized that nothing in this world really belongs to us. When the body itself—which we not only call our own but regard as our very self—perishes, is it not foolish on our part to claim other objects as our own ? In order to be able to cross the barrier of *Māyā*, it is necessary to eradicate this sense of my-ness. He who is able to achieve this easily crosses over *Māyā*.

यो विविक्तस्थानं सेवते, यो लोकबन्ध-
मुन्मूलयति, निस्त्रैगुण्यो भवति, योगक्षेमं
त्यजति ॥४७॥

47. He who lives in seclusion, snaps all worldly ties, transcends the three Gunas and gives up all thoughts of Yoga (supplying one's needs) and Kshema (safety of one's possessions).

Yoga and *Kṣema* of the devotee The
Lord Himself says in the *Gītā*:—

अनन्याश्चिन्तयन्तो मां ये जनाः पर्युपासते ।

तेषां नित्याभियुक्तानां योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम् ॥

(IX. 22)

"Those who are exclusively devoted to Me, and worship Me in a disinterested way, fixing their thoughts on Me, I Myself bear the burden of their *Yoga* and *Kṣema*, since they are ever united with Me "*

* There lived a virtuous and simple-hearted Brahman with his wife at Puri, where the famous shrine of Sri Jagannatha, the 'Lord of the Universe', is situated. He was a great lover of the *Gita*, and used day and night to study and meditate on the verses of the *Gita*. Although he had not yet developed the spirit of disinterestedness, he had nevertheless a great faith in God. One day, he wanted to examine the meaning of each word of the *Gita* from the practical point of

faith should not worry about them. Those who cannot depend on God and leaving the path of truth, virtue and

went out to beg Not long after he left the house, a lovely boy whose body was besmeared all over with blood called at his house, and addressed the wife of the Brahman thus "This consecrated food has been sent by the Panditji (the Brahman)" The Brahman lady was charmed to see his lovely face and to hear his sweet, enchanting words, at the same time she was very much pained at the sight of blood coming out of his body With tears in her eyes, she asked—"Who has been so cruel as to hurt you, my child?" The boy replied that it was her husband, the Brahman, who had hurt him. The lady was taken aback at this reply. She said, "My husband is a very simple and good-tempered man and a great devotee too; why should he hurt a lovely child like you?" The boy replied "I tell you the bare

of unbelievers. There is a popular verse in Sanskrit, which says—

“In vain does the Vaisnava (devotee) worry about food and other necessities of life Can God, who

with his pen Tears began to stream forth from his eyes He now realized that it was literally true that God Himself carried provisions to the devotee who believed in Him and relied on Him. The *Gita* is a verbal image of God Scoring through a word of the *Gita* was, therefore, equivalent to piercing the body of the Lord. Full of remorse for his crime, the Brahman fainted and fell down senseless on the ground The Lord then appeared before His devotee and blessed him with His beatific vision. The Brahman now rose from the ground and craved forgiveness for his crime and through an exuberance of emotion began to write the words ‘वहाम्यहम्’ on every inch of blank space in his copy of the *Gita*

Love of God Whatever the devotee does, does for the sake of God; he does not seek any reward for the same. He has no attachment either for *Karma*, or for its result; he acts only as an instrument of God But so long as he is conscious of the fact that he is only an instrument of God, that he works only for the sake of God, he may be said to have renounced only the fruit of action. He should be regarded as having renounced the action itself only when he no longer retains the consciousness of his being an agent. When as a result of his complete surrender of mind and intellect to God, the latter destroys the ego-sense of the devotee and begins to act through him installing Himself in the devotee's heart, then alone will the devotee be said to have renounced all *Karma* and risen above all pairs of opposites. He will no longer have any relation with pleasure and pain, gain and loss, or the feelings of mine and thine, you and I, and so on. But until this state becomes

From the point of view of one who is yet on the way to God-Realization, the interpretation of the above verse of the *Gītā*—wherein Arjuna is advised *inter alia* to renounce the Vedas as dealing with the world, which is nothing but a display of the three Gunas or modes of nature,—as meaning 'to become desireless' is but meet and proper. Renunciation of Vedas really means renunciation of desire. But in the stage of supreme Love—of which the Devarsi speaks here—the devotee gets merged in an ocean of unbroken, undivided Love of God, so that his dependence on the Vedas automatically gives way. The devotee is no longer capable of correctly performing any Vedic rite or worldly action. It is a rule with Love that when it grows the fetters of all rules and regulations automatically fall off. The scriptures themselves sanction this. In this stage the Vedas, finding their votary realizing their ultimate end and being gratified through the supreme gratification of the devotee, relinquish

Divine Love not only crosses *Māyā* himself, but takes all those who come in contact with him across *Māyā*. He becomes a true saviour of the world. In the *Bhāgavata* the Lord Himself says—"My devotee sanctifies the whole universe" (मङ्गल्युक्तो भुवनं पुनाति).

The question raised in the forty-sixth aphorism as to who crosses *Māyā* has been answered in the succeeding aphorisms. The means of attaining Divine Love, and the marks of those who have attained such Love, have been delineated through these aphorisms. In the next chapter the Devarsi will proceed to delineate the nature of that Love, attaining which great devotees are easily able to scale the heights described above as a natural state



through speech. The Love which yields itself to description through speech is the most external form of Love. Love is an emotion—an impulse felt within the heart. Bhagavān Śrī Rāma sent the following message of Love to the Universal Mother Śrī Jānakī, who was then in the captivity of Rāvana at Lankā —

“O dear, the truth about the Love between You and Me is known only to My heart, and that heart constantly stays with You
Know You that herein lies the essence of Love.”*

Love is experienced through the heart, and the heart of the Lover stays with the Beloved. In the absence of the heart, speech will have no direct means to describe the experiences of

* तत्त्व प्रेम कर मम अरु तोरा ।
जानत प्रिया एक मन मोरा ॥
सो मन रहत सदा तोहि पाही ।
जानु प्रीति रस एतनेहि माहीं ॥

52. It is like the Pleasure of the palate enjoyed by the dumb.

One who is dumb feels delighted when he tastes something sweet, he smiles, but he cannot describe the taste. Even so a Lover of God is immersed in joy when he obtains a direct experience of Love, he cannot, however, describe the nature of his experience to another. There is self-forgetfulness in Love. A Lover, therefore, does not know what he is, and what he knows. It is, therefore, that Śrī Rādhā once said to one of Her companions that She knew nothing of Love of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, She understood nothing about it, and that if at all She knew or understood anything about it, She had no words to express it. The only thing She knew was that the moment She felt His touch within the heart, She lost all Her consciousness.

more every moment, knows no break, is subtler than the subtlest and is of the nature of experience.

The attachment we develop for a person on perceiving some good quality in him is liable to disappear the moment we fail to notice that quality. True Love, however, is not dependent on qualities. The true Lover finds no time to look into the virtues and faults of the Beloved, his Love is a spontaneous outpouring of the heart. Or the expression 'devoid of qualities' may be taken to mean that Love transcends the Guṇas. It is beyond the pale of the three Guṇas.

There is no self-seeking in Love, because in that realm there is no tinge of self-interest beyond the desire of seeing the Beloved happy. The Beloved alone is the supreme object to be attained by the Lover. Where there is the faintest desire to receive something in return, the altar of Love is defiled by vile lust.

than the subtlest and is only experienced through the heart. Says the great devotee Rasakhan, as if paraphrasing the aphorism quoted above —

“Love is the fountain of all sweetness, which is not dependent on youth, virtue, beauty or wealth, nor tainted by self-interest or thoughts of personal gain, and which is unalloyed and free from desire (of self-gratification). Very subtle, very soft, very slender, very remote, Love is the hardest of all, constant and unvaried in sweetness, brimful All sweetness, spontaneous, disinterested, unwavering, sublime, unvaried in sweetness, constantly growing—such is pure Love, O Rasakhan ”*

* बिनु जोवन गुन रूप धन, बिनु स्वारथ हित जानि ।
सुद्ध, कामना ते रहित, प्रेम सकल रसखानि ॥
अति सूच्छम, कोमल अतिहि, अति पतरो, अति दूर ।
प्रेम कठिन सबते सदा, नित इकरस भरपूर ॥
रसमय स्वाभाविक, बिना स्वारथ, अचल महान ।
सदा एकरस बढ़त नित सुद्ध प्रेम रसखान ॥

The water of the Jamuna is dark,
The sky is overcast with dark
clouds.

All colours are permeated with the dark colour,

People say this is something novel
Am I mad, or the dark pupil of the
people's eyes is changed?

The heart of the Moon and the son
of the Sun are dark.

The Musk is dark, as well as Cupid, the conqueror of the world

The neck of the blue-necked Siva is also dark.

As if the dark colour has been
broadcast all over the earth

The letters of the Vedas appear dark

The point of the tapering light is
also dark

Not to speak of men and gods,

The Formless *Brahma* Itself has
assumed a dark Form.'*

* जित देखौ तित स्याममई है ।

स्याम कुंज बन जमुना स्यामा,

स्याम गगन घन घटा छई है ॥

सब रगनमे स्याम भरो है,

लोग कहत यह बात नई है ।

In whichever direction I look, I see
nothing but Śyāma,
It is Śyāma, again, who is spread
before my eyes and has settled in
my mind '*
'This Love of Śyāma is something
which cannot be expressed through
words,
The sky, water, earth, animate and
inanimate creation,
All appear painted in the colour of
Śyāma
Brahma has vanished, *Māyā*, too, has
disappeared
No *Jīva*, no time
Even one's own Self has been
forgotten.

* बाटनमे घाटनमें बीथिनमे बागनमे

बृच्छनमें बेलिनमे बाटिकामे बनमे ।
 दरनमें दिवारनमे देहरी दरीचनमें,
 हीरनमें हारनमे भूषनमे तनमे ॥
 काननमे कुजनमें गोपिनमें गायनमें,
 गोकुलमें गोधनमें दामिनमे घनमें ।
 जहाँ जहाँ देखौ तहाँ स्याम ही दिखाई देत
 सालिग्राम छाइ रह्यो नैननमें मनमें ॥

Beloved would escape his lips. He would never feel tired of singing praises of his Beloved. In every word that he would utter he would enjoy the incomparable flavour of the nectar of Divine Love, he would ever remain absorbed in quaffing that nectar with unabated zest. No room would be left in his heart for anybody else, the Beloved alone would enjoy undivided sovereignty and exercise fullest authority over it. No corner of his heart would remain unoccupied to admit even a shadow of remembrance of the existence of anyone else. His heart is transformed into the very image of Love for the Beloved. The poet visualizes this very state of the devotee when he says—

“We refuse to hear the sound of any
other Name through these ears,
This thread (of life) is coloured
in one single hue
If any other Name escapes our
lips through inadvertence,
Let the mouth be sealed, and the
tongue dipped in the strongest poison,

Nanda, who is an embodiment of all Beauty and Sweetness, the Lord of Love and the fountain-head of Joy, and whose touch is most delightful. He is sound in *Ākāśa* (ether), the quality of touch in Air, light in Fire, flavour in Water, and smell in Earth. He permeates all that exists. It is He who is revealing, however imperfectly, His own incomparable Beauty through every object. Everywhere there is Love and Bliss alone. The whole universe is full of Love, full of Bliss, full of enjoyment, full of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Every object is permeated with Joy, Beauty and Sweetness. The perceiver and the perceived, both are full of sweetness; I and Thou both are sweet; everything pertaining to that Lord of Sweetness, the embodiment of supreme nectarean joy, is sweet. The *Śruti* says—

मधु वाता ऋतायते, मधु क्षरन्ति सिन्धवः, माध्वीर्नः
सन्तवोषधीः, मधुमत् पार्थिवं रजः ॥

"Sweet are the winds that blow, the
seas scatter sweetness all round, let

“Where none else is seen, none else is heard, none else is cognized, that is the state of the Infinite When others are seen, heard and cognized that is the finite state That which is Infinite is Immortal, while that which is finite is mortal.”*

That is why Love is always sweet, immortal, eternal, and synonymous with Truth itself.

गौणी त्रिधा गुणभेदादार्तादिभेदाद्वा ॥५६॥

56. There are three kinds of Secondary Devotion classified according to Gunas, or according to types, such as the Devotion of the afflicted etc.

The Primary, or Superior type of Devotion, through which the loving devotee attains his beloved Lord in the form of Love, has been discussed

* यत्र नान्यत्पश्यति नान्यच्छृणोति नान्यद्विजानाति स भूमाथ
यत्रान्यत्पश्यत्यन्यच्छृणोत्यन्यद्विजानाति तदल्पम्, यो वै भूमा
तदमृतमथ यदल्पं तन्मर्त्यम् ॥

(*Ohhandogyopanishad*, VII xxiv 1)

Truth (जिज्ञासु) or the seeker of worldly gain (अर्थार्थी).

The Devotion, which is intended for wiping out sins and is practised in the form of offering the fruits of actions to God, or in which worship is performed as a duty maintaining distinction between the worshipper and the worshipped, is the Sattvic form of Devotion (*Bhāgavata*, III. xxix 10)

The Devotion, which is prompted with the desire of acquiring worldly enjoyments, fame and earthly power, and is practised in the form of image-worship only, is the Rajasic type of Devotion (*Bhāgavata*, III xxix 9).

The Devotion, which is actuated by anger, the spirit of injury, hypocrisy and jealousy is the Tamasic or lowest type of Devotion (*Bhāgavata*, III. xxix 8)

Similarly, the distressed, the seeker of Truth and the seeker of worldly possessions practise three different forms of Devotion through three different

the direct result of these three—remembrance of God, contemplation of God, and dependence on God—is God-Realization. Therefore, everyone should make it a point to practise Devotion in whatever form it may be. But as far as possible one should try to practise the Sattvic form of Devotion, or let him practise Devotion as a true seeker of wealth (अर्थी), for the attainment of Divine Love, looking upon the accumulated treasures of the whole world as trash and an evil, and recognizing God as the supreme object, the supreme wealth

उत्तरस्मादुत्तरस्मात्पूर्वपूर्वा श्रेयाय भवति
॥ ५७ ॥

57. (Among these) every preceding type of Devotion is better and more fruitful than every succeeding type.

The Rajasic type of Devotion is better than the Tamasic type, and

Easiness and Superiority of Devotion as a Practice.

अन्यस्मात् सौलभ्यं भक्तौ ॥ ५८ ॥

58. The practice of Devotion is the easiest of all forms of spiritual practice.

The glory of the path of Devotion and its superiority as a discipline over the paths of *Karma*, *Yoga* and *Jñāna*, etc., have been discussed in the foregoing sections. The author now proceeds to show that though superior to all other achievements, Devotion is the easiest to attain. Learning, wealth, high birth, high rank in the social order, study of the Vedas, austere penance, wisdom and dispassion, none of these is necessary for the attainment of *Bhakti* (Devotion); what is needed is constant and loving remembrance of

in the Divine Grace, exclusive remembrance of God can be practised under all conditions and by all alike, irrespective of age, sex or social rank. One has neither to renounce nor adopt anything in this practice. Even though the Divine Grace extends on all at all times, we have no faith in it; it is this faith which has got to be cultivated and strengthened. When this is done, all that is required for attainment of Devotion will be automatically realized by the practisant. "I am easy of attainment by such a person", says the Lord in the *Gītā* (VIII 14). Devotion cannot be attained through any other means, it is attained only through *Bhajana* (Remembrance of God)

प्रमाणान्तरस्यानपेक्षत्वात् स्वयंप्रमाणत्वात्
॥ ५९ ॥

59. The proof of Devotion is Devotion itself, it requires no other proof.

Himself who is manifested in the form of Divine Love, that is why Divine Love is of the nature of Peace and Supreme Bliss. God who is Bliss Itself manifests Himself through that Bliss aspect (known in Sanskrit terminology as the *Hlādinī* aspect) in the form of Divine Love and the Lover, and enjoys that Bliss revealing Himself, again, as the Beloved. This is what they call His Sport of Joy (आनन्दलील) It should, however, be noted here that the Lord whose Love or Devotion is of the nature of Peace and Bliss, is not the same as the *Saguna Brahma* (God with Attributes) of the philosophers of the *Nirguṇa* school, whom they regard as tied to the Gunas of *Prakṛti*, viz., *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*. The Divine Form of the blessed Lord is eternally revealed through His *Yoga-māyā*, who is His own Bliss aspect. That is why sages who have attained the bliss of Self-Realization, and *Jīvanmuktas* (liberated souls) like Vyāsa, Nārada, Śukadeva, Janaka and

describe Him as the ocean of Peace and Bliss is no correct description of His nature. It is His Love which has been described as being Supreme Peace and Supreme Bliss, and it is this Love of which Devarṣi Nārada speaks in the above aphorism.



plation on his dearest Lord should be the only object of his concern. It is just the same to him whether those who are near and dear to him, his resources in the shape of men and money and other worldly possessions such as honour, etc., remain intact or perish; he is absolutely unconcerned with them; for having offered them to God, he has already made himself destitute in every way. Besides, where should he find the time or the mind to worry about these things, his mind having already been robbed by thoughts of that wish-yielding jewel (God), who takes away all anxieties. That past-master in the art of thieving is never inclined to return the devotee's mind to him; and in the absence of the mind how should he worry about any loss? A traveller in the path of God-Love should, therefore, feel no worry about worldly losses. He should fix his thoughts on God alone, who is the root and substance of everything. And it becomes natural for the mind of the devotee to do so.

warns us that worldly activities should not be deliberately abandoned. Go on doing your work renouncing the desire for fruit. He who carried on his duties in a disinterested spirit is automatically freed from all anxieties concerning worldly losses, and those worldly activities of his, carried on in a disinterested spirit for the approbation of God, prove helpful in the attainment of Devotion.

स्त्रीधननास्तिकवैरिचरित्रं* न श्रवणीयम् ६३

63. Talks about women, wealth, unbelievers or one's enemies should not be heard.

In the preceding aphorism it has been enjoined that worldly activities should not be renounced, they should, therefore, be pursued in the ordinary course. But the traveller on the path of God-Love should take particular care, even in the course of these activities, to avoid hearing talks about women, wealth, unbelievers or one's enemies.

(1) He whose mind is engrossed in thoughts of women can never con-

* Some read it as 'स्त्रीधननास्तिकचरित्रम्'

attached to women.”* Again, in the fifth book, the contact of men attached to women has been described as the ‘gate of Hell’. Just as men should avoid the company of women even so women should avoid the company of men.

(2) The thought of wealth gives rise to greed. Once greed is roused in the mind, the discrimination between right and wrong is lost, and leaving the right track man begins to follow the path of unrighteousness. Hence one should shun the sight of wealth and refuse to hear the proud talks of the wealthy centring round worldly enjoyments.

(3) An unbeliever is he who does not believe in God and the scriptures. There is no greater enemy of mankind than the sceptic, who does not believe in the existence of God. ‘All this is nonsense. There is no substance in

* न तथास्य भवेन्मोहो वन्वश्चान्यप्रसङ्गतः ।

योपित्तङ्गाद्यथा पुंसो यया तत्सङ्गिसङ्गतः ॥

(III xxxi 35)

But so long as perfection in the path is not reached the practicant has to develop this idea mentally and should try to persuade himself that everything is a manifestation of his Lord. At this stage, if any other person happens to harbour ill-will against him, or bears enmity towards him through some misunderstanding, the practicant should try as far as possible to avoid hearing any talk about this enmity. For it is very likely that through hearing of such talks anger may be aroused in him. On his own part, therefore, let the practicant regard none as his enemy except his own untamed mind; and if anybody else entertains enmity towards him, let him not take any notice of it.

Thought of woman excites passion, thought of money arouses greed, thought of an unbeliever induces disbelief in God, and thought of the enemy provokes anger. Therefore, as far as possible stories of these four should never be heard.

pridelessness should be driven out of the heart. Cultivation of the spirit of humility, modesty and docility is a sovereign remedy for uprooting pride. The practice of bowing before representation of God also kills pride. Hypocrisy should likewise be renounced. Hypocrisy means to simulate virtues which one does not actually possess, either through greed for wealth or honour, or through force of habit, to feign the character of a pious man, a devotee or a self-denying man. The path of spiritual progress is badly blocked for the hypocrite. He exhausts all his learning, intellect and resourcefulness in maintaining his false appearance. Absence of pride and simplicity are the two sovereign helps in the path of Devotion, and Pride and Hypocrisy are the two great obstacles. The last two evils form part of the demoniacal properties. By adding 'etc.' after them, the author has made an indirect reference to the other evils coming under the head of the demoniacal

तदर्पिताखिलाचारः सन् कामक्रोधाभिमाना-
दिकं तस्मिन्नेव करणीयम् ॥ ६५ ॥

65. Having offered all activities to God, if the devotee is still haunted by lust, anger, pride, etc., he should direct these towards Him (God).

(hoping to satisfy their desires through illegitimate means) they engage in action with impure resolves Giving themselves over to untold cares till the last breath, regarding the gratification of desires as the highest object of life, held in bondage by a hundred ties of aspirations, given over to lust and anger, they strive to obtain by unlawful means (theft, treachery, etc.) hoards of wealth for sensual enjoyments This I have gained today, that object, too, will be realized in due course, so much wealth is already mine and so much more will be added to it. I have got rid of this enemy, and shall dispose of others as well. I am the Lord, I am the enjoyer, I am perfect, powerful and happy. I am

Lord, O the Ravisher of Soul ! O the Soother of eyes, when will You bless these eyes with a sight of Thy graceful Form ?”*

Śrī Rukminī Devī, who was wholly absorbed in the Love of Śrī Kṛṣṇa says —

“O Imperishable One ! O the Enchanter of the three worlds ! Hearing the praises of Thy divine virtues, which entering the heart through the passage of the ears remove all the fret and fever of the hearer, and of Thy Divine Form which is the supreme object of sight for those who are endowed with eyes,—my heart has lost all sense of shame and has become wholly attached to Thee. O Mukunda, the bestower of salvation ! there is none who can be compared to Thee, in pedigree, elegance of form, in

ॐ हे देव हे दयित हे भुवनैकबन्धो
 हे कृष्ण हे नमल हे करुणैकसिन्धो ।
 हे नाथ हे रमण हे नयनाभिराम
 ए हा कदा नु भवितासि पदं दृशोर्मे ॥

(Śrī Kṛṣṇa-Karnamita)

The principal queens of Śrī Kṛṣṇa once addressed Draupadī thus:—

"O pious lady, we have no desire for sovereignty over the whole earth, lordship over the domains of Indra, supernatural powers (Siddhis), the position of Brahmā (the Creator), salvation or even a place in *Vaiṣṇava*. Our sole ambition is to be able to place on our head the dust of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's feet scented by saffron on the bosom of Kamalā (the Goddess of Wealth) " *

का त्वा मुकुन्द महती कुलशीलरूप-
 विद्यावयोद्रविणधामभिरात्मतुल्यम् ।
 धीरा पति कुलवती न वृणीत कन्या
 काले नृसिंह नरलोकमनोऽभिरामम् ॥
 यस्यास्ति पद्मजरजःक्षपनं महान्तो
 वाञ्छन्त्युमापतिरिवात्मतमोऽपहत्यै ।
 यर्हाम्बुजाक्ष न लभेय भवत्प्रसाद
 जल्लाम्भून् व्रतकृशाञ्छतजन्मभिः स्यात् ॥

(Śrīmad Bhāgavatā X 62 37, 38, 43)

* न वयं सावित्र साम्राज्य स्वाराज्य भौज्यमप्युत ।
 वैराज्य पारमेष्ठ्य च आनन्त्य वा हरेः पदम् ॥
 कामयामहे एतस्य श्रीमत्पादरजः श्रियः ।
 कुचकुङ्कुमगन्धाढ्य मूर्धा वोढु गदाभृतः ॥

(Śrīmad Bhāgavatā X. 63 41-42)

service and reveal to us the beautiful lotus of Your face. O Delighter of our souls, O Remover of distress, Your sacred feet fulfil the desires of those who prostrate before them, they are constantly tended by the lotus-born Śrī Lakṣmī, they are the ornaments of the earth, they bestow peace and bliss when meditated on at the time of distress O Dearest, place those supremely blissful and soothing pair of Your lotus feet on our heated bosom '*

* विरचिताभयं वृष्णिधुर्यं ते
 चरणमीयुषां संसृतेर्भयात् ।
 करसरोरुहं कान्त कामदं
 शिरसि धेहि नः श्रीकरग्रहम् ॥
 व्रजजनार्तिहन् वीर योषितां
 निजजनस्मयध्वंसनस्मित ।
 भज सखे भवत्किङ्करीः स्म नो
 जलरुहाननं चारु दर्शय ॥
 प्रणतकामदं पद्मजार्चितं
 धरणिमण्डनं ध्येयमापदि ।
 चरणपङ्कजं शंतम च ते
 रमण नः स्तनेष्वर्पयाधिहन् ॥

(*Bhagavata* X xxxi 5, 6, 13)

through their divine eyes and divine consciousness, nobody has the power to describe: This is a mystic experience which is impossible to describe

At this stage, the devotee automatically dedicates his all to the sacred feet of His beloved Lord, and maddened by the ecstasy of joy cries out in utter disregard of the whole world:—

"Fain would I renounce my hearth
and home, renounce the forest,
renounce the town and the
townsmen,
And renounce as well the precincts
of the Bansibat (my favourite
resort),

I would fight shy of none.

I can cast off this body and quit my
abode, but tell me how can I
forswear my affections ?

For the sake of my Beloved, I
would gladly put on the robe of a
mendicant

The world itself has gone mad, that
they call me mad,

But I shall not prevent anyone from
calling me mad,

I would fain desert those who

Beloved, the devotee prays to God with an anxious heart thus:—

“Let this body be resolved into the five elements of which it is composed, and let these elements enter their respective sources, but I beg one boon of Thee, O Lord, with my head bent low in submission. Please so ordain that the water in my body may go and join the water of the well which is used by my Beloved for drinking and bathing purposes. Let the element of fire in my body go and merge in the looking-glass used by my Beloved, let the element of air go and reside in the blessed fan used by Him, and let the element of ether be united with the ether of the atmosphere in which my Beloved lives.”*

As for the soul inhabiting the body, it can never remain apart from

* पञ्चत्व तनुरेतु भूतनिवहाः स्वांशे विशन्तु स्फुटम्
धातारं प्रणिपत्य हन्त शिरसा तत्रापि याचे वरम् ।
तद्वापीषु पयस्तदीयमुकुरे ज्योतिस्तदीयाङ्गने
व्योम्नि व्योम तदीयवर्त्मनि धरा तत्तालवृन्तेऽनिलः ॥

I shall not hear the music of the bee
or the cuckoo, nor shall I touch the
blue lotus with My hand '*

Let the reader mark carefully how
much Love is concealed behind this
anger !

On another occasion, in order to
enjoy the loving anger of His devoted
playmates, the playful Lord wilfully
played a foul game with them and thus
made them angry. The friends there-
upon decided to boycott their naughty
companion. None of them, however,
was actually prepared to bear His
separation even for a moment, for He
was the very breath of their life. But
making a show of anger they said
"Krsna, You Yourself violate the rules

* मिलौ न तिन सों भूल, अब जौलौ जीवन जियौ ।

सहौ बिरह को सूल, बर ताकी ज्वाला जरौ ॥

मैं अब अपने मन यह ठानी । उन के पंथ पिऊँ नहिं पानी ॥

कबहुँ नैन न अंजन लाऊँ । मृगमद भूलि न अंग चढ़ाऊँ ॥

सुनौँ न श्रवननि अलि पिक बानी । नील जलज परसौँ नहिं पानी ॥

swore by Nanda (His father) and paid the wager '* -

This is a specimen of the devotees' anger.

Now remains the question of pride. Anent this, it may be said that a wounded sense of innocent pride is an embellishment of God-Love. Once upon a time Śrī Rādhā got displeased with Śrī Kṛṣṇa and assumed an attitude of stiffness towards Him. Addressing Her companions, She said —

"O friends, let not the Darling of Nanda (Śrī Kṛṣṇa) be admitted into My presence, However much He may coax you, allow Him not to enter My portals How can people who indulge in hypocrisy like Him be trusted ?

* खेलत में को काको गुसैयों ॥

हरि हारे, जीते श्रीदामा, बरबस ही कत करत रुसैयों ॥
जाति पॉति हमते बड़ नार्हीं, ना हम बसत तुम्हारी छैयों ।
अति अधिकार जनावत ताते, जाते अधिक तुम्हारें गैयों ॥
रूठ करे ता सँग को खेलै, हा हा खात परत तव पैयों ।
'सूरदास' प्रभु खेल्यो ही चाहैं, दाँव दियो करि नंद दुहैयों ॥

Vatsa, Arista and Keśi, I swallowed
 up the conflagration
 Assuming the form of a charming
 lady I enchanted gods as well as
 the demons and there was none in
 the world who did not yield to My
 charms
 In order to restore the dead child
 of My preceptor, I searched the
 deep ocean,
 I know not what is there in this
 joy which makes it ever new !
 Says 'Surasyama' in My efforts to
 conciliate Thee, I have forgotten all
 My strength '*

* इतो श्रम नाहिन तवहुं भयो ।

सुनु राधिका जितो श्रम मोको ते यह मान दयो ॥
 धरनी धर विधि वेद उधार्यो, मधु सो सत्रु हयो ।
 द्विज नृप किए, दुसह दुख मेटे, बलि को राज लयो ॥
 तोरथो घनुष सुयवर कीनो, रावन अजित जयो ।
 अघ बक वच्छ अरिष्ट केसि मथि दावानल अचयो ॥
 तिय वपु धरथो, असुर सुर मोहे, को जग जो न द्रयो ।
 गुरुसुत मृतक ज्याथवे कारन सागर सोध लयो ॥
 जानौं नाहिं कहा या रस मे सहजहिं होत नयो ।
 'सूरस्याम' बल तोहि मनावत मोहि सब विसरि गयो ॥

when directed towards God. This should always be definitely borne in mind

In *Śrīmad Bhāgavata*, we find the following utterance of Śukadeva, the prince among ascetics —

कामं क्रोध भयं स्नेहमैक्यं सौहृदमेव च ।

नित्य हरौ विदधतो यान्ति तन्मयता हि ते ॥

(X xxix 15)

"Passion, anger, fear, affection, feeling of identity, friendship he who directs these towards God is bound to attain absorption in Him "

Intense passion is aroused only for an object which is superior to all in every respect, which embodies all glory, supreme sweetness, perfect beauty, infinite Bliss All this is present in God Realizing this, let the practicant be constantly oppressed by the sole desire of meeting Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and let this passion grow from more to more in his heart Let him ventilate his anger towards Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the following endearing terms "You are, indeed, very hard-hearted and cruel. You do not

mother and the suck given by her. How can the child desire anything else when it has no knowledge of any other thing. The only object of its knowledge and desire is its mother. It can never be satisfied with anything given in exchange for the mother. Even so, the devotee should crave for nothing else than God. God alone should be the object of his craving.

When the child has somewhat grown and begins to toddle, it stumbles and falls. It begins to cry. Hearing it cry the mother runs to its help. But the child gets angry with the mother; although it stumbled and had a fall itself, the mother becomes the object of its displeasure. Repeatedly it stammers out—"Why did you leave me alone and go elsewhere?" Now it assumes an attitude of stiffness towards the mother through a wounded sense of pride and says "I shall no more talk with you, nor shall I ever sit on your lap." The mother tries to appease its anger by taking the child in her arms and giving it a

The Glory of Devotees on the Path of Love.

त्रिरूपभङ्गपूर्वकं नित्यदासनित्यकान्ताभज-
नात्मकं वा प्रेमैव कार्यम्, प्रेमैव कार्यम् ॥६६॥

66. Dissolving the triple consciousness (viz., worshipper, the object of worship and the act of worship) Love alone should be cultivated,—Love alone in the form of incessant service of the Lord, or incessant wifely Devotion to the Lord.

Dissolving the triple consciousness in the shape of the worshipper, the object of worship and the act of worship or the Lover, the Beloved and the act of loving, Love alone should be offered to the Lord in the form of incessant service or incessant wifely Devotion. Both in the attitude of a worshipper or servitor

engaged in his service in a perfectly disinterested spirit,—such is the ideal of wifely Devotion. In essence, both these attitudes or types of Devotion are one. There is equality in both. There is identity in both. Even in Devotion through service, a servitor forgets his all and accepts the Name and family of the Lord as his own. Whereas wifely Devotion is attained only when one identifies oneself with the name and family of one's husband. The following are the sentiments of Goswami Tulasidas in regard to *Dāsyabhāva*, Devotion through service.—

“I belong to no particular caste or community, nor have I anything to do with another's caste or community,
 No one is of any use to me, nor
 am I of any use to anyone.
 My welfare in this world as well
 as in the next lies in the hands of
 the Lord of Raghus,
 The Name is the only mainstay of
 Tulasi
 People are utterly ignorant, they
 know not the truth—

of Śrī Hari is more difficult to obtain than the position of Brahmā (Creator), residence in heaven, the position of Indra (the Lord of Paradise), immortality, a drink of nectar and even perfection (the highest Bliss or Salvation) '*

In wifely Devotion, of course, there is perfect self-identification with the Lord Dādū, the great medieval saint of Rajputana, says:—

"Love of my beloved Lord is seated
in the heart,
Every hair on my body is, therefore,
resounding with the sound of
"Dear Lord !" "Dear Lord !"

to the Lord), (3) *Sarshṭi* (enjoying the same powers as the Lord), (4) *Sarupya* (having a similar form to that of Śrī Hari) and (5) *Sayujya* (absolute identity with the Lord).

* कृष्णभक्तिः कृष्णदास्यं वरेषु च वरं वरम् ।
श्रेष्ठा पञ्चविधा मुक्तेर्हरिभक्तिर्गरीयसी ॥
ब्रह्मत्वादपि देवत्वादिन्द्रत्वादमरादपि ।
अमृतात् सिद्धिलाभाच्च हरिदास्यं सुदुर्लभम् ॥

(*Brahma-vivarta-Purana*, Krishna-Kharda 97, 8—9)

the foregoing aphorism is the best of all. For his body, mind, wealth and everything else becomes the property of God. He lives in the world as an instrument of God. His soul is merged in the Oversoul, his mind is absorbed in the mind of God, his eyes behold everywhere and at every time the image of his beloved Lord. The poet says:—

“The image of the Beloved has
settled in the eyes how can any
other object enter them ?
The wayfarer, says Rahim, will
himself go back when he finds the
rest-house packed to the full”*

Kabir also says —

“It is no longer possible, says
Kabir, even to apply collyrium.
The Beloved has settled in the
eyes: how can anyone else enter
them ?
I have no one else to count upon
during the eight watches and
twenty-four hours of the livelong day.

* प्रीतम छवि नैनन बसी, पर छवि कहाँ समाय ।
भरी सराय ‘रहीम’ लखि आप पथिक फिरि जाय ॥

Love shoot out from every pore of their body and radiate the spotless lustre of Love everywhere around them. The whole atmosphere of that place gets purified and is surcharged with currents of Divine Love. Such devotees forget their very self in the height of emotion, they shed tears of Love and are immersed in supreme Bliss. Such a state is very rare and highly sublime and pure. It goes without saying that the whole family of the blessed devotee who has reached this state is sanctified. Says Goswami Tulasidas.—

“The family in which an humble devotee of the Lord of Raghus (Śrī Rāma) is born is indeed blessed, holy and worthy of adoration by the whole world*.”

Nay, the whole earth is sanctified by their very presence. Even the man who comes into contact with the air touched by the body of such a loving devotee is sanctified. The scripture says —

* सो कुल धन्य उमा सुनु जगतपूज्य सुपुनीत ।
श्रीरघुवीर परायन जहँ नर उपज विनीत ॥

तीर्थोर्कुर्वन्ति तीर्थानि सुकर्मोर्कुर्वन्ति कर्माणि
सच्छास्त्रीकुर्वन्ति शास्त्राणि ॥ ६९ ॥

69. Such devotees enhance the sanctity of sacred places, add glory to actions and lend authority to the scriptures.

Sacred places and rivers, etc, rid those of their sins who resort to them, and purify them, but they are defiled in their turn by the constant contact of sinful men and women who visit them. This contamination brought by the pilgrims is removed by the contact of holy men. Goddess Gangā, the presiding deity of the river of that name, propitiated by the austere penance of king Bhagīratha, son of Dilīpa, appeared in person in order to bless him and said, "How can I descend on this earth ? All the sinners of this world will wash their sins and purify themselves by immersing their sinful bodies in my sacred waters, but where shall I wash the immense store of sins

be welcome to him who is afraid of transmigration '*

King Yudhiṣṭhira, addressing the great devotee Vidura, says —

“Devotees of your type, who are embodiments of sanctity, themselves revive the sanctity of sacred places (defiled by the contact of sinners) through the presence in their heart of the wielder of Maṇe (Śrī Hari) ”†

Even so whatever actions are enjoined by the Śāstras and are performed by such devotees are recognized as good and commendable actions and those scriptures alone which are recognized by them are held as authoritative. Nay, it will be no

* तेषां विचरतां पदभ्यां तीर्थानां पावनेच्छया ।
भीतस्य किं न रोचेत तावकानां समागमः ॥

(*Srīmad Bhagavata* IV xxx 87)

† भवद्विधा भागवतास्तीर्थभूताः स्वयं प्रभो ।
तीर्थीकुर्वन्ति तीर्थानि स्वान्तःस्थेन गदाभृता ॥

(*Ibid* I xiii 10)

of the place where he lives, is purified. It is, therefore, that even holy places, virtuous actions and holy books are rendered holier by the contact of such a devotee. It is through devotees of this type that the glory of God, His Name and Devotion to Him is enhanced, and the vilest sinner coming in contact with them easily crosses the terrible ocean of worldly existence.

मोदन्ते पितरो नृत्यन्ति देवताः सनाथा
चेयं भूर्भवति ॥७१॥

71. On the advent of a devotee, his ancestors (in the other world) rejoice, celestial beings begin to dance (out of joy) and the earth is endowed with a protector.

The advent of a devotee is a happy augury for all, for all his activities are naturally conducive to the welfare of the world. His very existence fosters respect for *Dharma* among the people and engenders faith in the worship of the manes and gods. The result is

is therefore that the Lord who is all-truth, all-consciousness and all-bliss appears before him in His Divine form just in order to pacify and appease him by embracing and caressing him like a fond mother. Simultaneously with His appearance the destruction of Asuras, the enemies of gods, commences. Thus gods also begin to dance, knowing the advent of a *Bhakta* to be the precursor of the manifestation of the Lord. Mother Earth remains unprotected so long as the Lord Himself or His beloved devotees do not appear in this world and on the advent of a devotee the Lord also follows close upon his heels like a cow which fondly runs after its new-born calf. That is how the earth is endowed with a protector with the very appearance of a devotee.

नास्ति तेषु जातिविद्यारूपकुलधनक्रियादि-
भेदः ॥७२॥

72. Among them (the devotees) there is no distinction due to caste, learning, outward appearance, birth, possessions and occupation, etc.

accomplished in every way, in whose heart *Bhakti*, the fruit of all noble actions, resides, no matter who he is. Goswami Tulasidas says the same thing in his *Ramacharitamānasa* —

"He alone is all-knowing and accomplished, he alone is a bestower of gifts and he alone is an ornament of the earth, learned and wise, he alone is pious and he alone is a saviour of his line, whose mind is attached to the feet of Śrī Rāma. He alone is prudent and sanest of all, he it is who has correctly understood the teachings of the Vedas, he alone is a man of knowledge and he alone is daring, who adores Śrī Rāma with a sincere heart"*

The Lord of Raghus (Śrī Rāma) says to Śabarī—

"I recognize the kinship of Devotion only A man lacking in Devotion,

* सोइ सर्वग्य गुनी सोइ दाता । सोइ महिमंडित पंडित ग्याता ॥
 धरम परायन सोइ कुलत्राता । राम चरन जेहि कर मन राता ॥
 नीति निपुन सोइ परम सयाना । श्रुति सिद्धान्त नीक तेहि जाना ॥
 सोइ कोविड सोई रनधीरा । जो छलु छाड़ि भजइ रघुवीरा ॥

the rules of *Varṇāśrama* are two separate things: they should not be confounded. Those who seek to abolish the distinction in the name of *Bhakti* bring a slur on *Bhakti*. Hence practicans traversing the path of *Bhakti* should never think of repudiating the authority of the Śāstras. It is true that wealth and learning cannot be acquired unless one has earned them by virtue of his past *Karma*, nor is it possible to change one's appearance, caste or lineage in this life. But the presence or absence of these qualifications or their abundance or inadequacy should not lead us to form a high or low opinion about a *Bhakta*—a *Bhakta* should not be looked down upon on the ground of birth, etc., and should be judged by his *Bhakti* alone. It is therefore that in Vaisnava scriptures discrimination among Bhaktas on grounds of caste, etc., has been declared an offence *

* In the Vaishnava scriptures sixty-four offences have been enumerated

By dint of their Devotion, the devotees become in effect embodiments of the

amorous sport, (15) to discriminate (between touchables and untouchables) in festivities connected with the Lord, (16) to have no faith in God and the Shastrias and to turn an unbeliever, (17) to practise *Dharma* with a doubting mind, (18) to be slothful in discharging one's religious duties, (19) to judge devotees by external things, (20) to comment on the merits and demerits of saints, (21) to have a high opinion about one's own self, (22) to revile a particular god or scripture, (23) to turn one's back on an image of God, (24) to approach an image of God with shoes on, (25) to wear a garland in the presence of an image of God, (26) to approach an image of God stick in hand, (27) to approach an image of God in a blue garment, (28) to approach an image of God without washing one's mouth and cleaning one's teeth, (29) to enter a temple of God without changing one's clothes after evacuating one's bowels or sexual intercourse, (30) to stretch one's arms or legs before an image of God, (31) to chew betel-leaves before an image of

of them recognizes himself as superior to the rest

of one's chosen deity, (50) to sell *Dharma* and the Name of God, (51) to expect anything from anyone else than one's chosen deity, (52) to violate the injunctions of the *Shastras*, (53) to behave as a knower of *Brahma*, even though lacking such knowledge, (54) to discriminate between *Vaishnavas* belonging to different sects, (55) to behave as a god, (56) to revile particular *Avataras* by discriminating between their respective *Lilas*, (57) to call anyone as God even in jest, (58) to believe God, even by mistake, to be dependant on anyone else, (59) to give the *Prasada* or *Oharanamrita* of the Lord to anyone through greed, (60) to insult a picture, image or Name of God, (61) to oppress, intimidate or wrong anyone, (62) to renounce faith on losing in a controversy or on one's failure to establish a proposition, (63) to regard the birth and activities of the various *Avataras* as commonplace, and (64) to regard the pair forms of the Deity, such as Sri Radha and Sri Krishna, as distinct or separate



underlying creation?—all these things he need not know. Knowing and believing God as the be-all and end-all of life, he has made Him his exclusive goal. God will Himself reveal His truth to him whenever He wills. When will God reveal His truth to him, and whether at all He will reveal it to him—these thoughts too should not agitate the mind of the devotee. There should be no room in his mind for entertaining any thought other than the thought of His beloved Lord. And it is as certain as anything that Truth can never be realized through logical argument. That is why the *Brahma-Sūtras* lay down that 'logical reasoning has no foundation or stability, 'तर्काप्रतिष्ठानात्' (II 11) The *Kāthopanisad* says. 'नैषा तर्केण मतिरापनेया' (I ii 9) 'that Truth cannot be realized through intellectual reasoning'. Truth or Reality is automatically revealed to a pure-hearted individual having the *Sattva* element predominating in him. The maxim 'वादे वादे जायते तत्त्वबोध' (Truth is known through argument and reasoning)

is said 'वादे वादे वर्द्धते वैरवह्नि.'—(The fire of animosity blazes up through controversial reasoning) The wayfarer on the path of Devotion should find no time to enter into a controversy. As far as possible he should keep aloof from places where such disputations are generally held. If ever through a decree of Providence he should fall in with controversialists of this type, he should assume an attitude of humility towards them and give a patient hearing to them and should never prolong the discussion by attempting a reply 'अतृणे पतितो वह्नि. स्वयमेवोपशान्यति' goes the Sanskrit proverb. 'When no fuel is added to the fire it will automatically go out.' The disputant will be automatically silenced if we refuse to give answer to him. Therefore, the best course for the devotee is to keep mum. He should constantly remember the saying 'मौनं सर्वार्थसाधनम्' (all objects are achieved through observance of silence). Let him not hear any word which may create doubt in his mind in regard to his faith, the object

self-praise or extol his own views; let him not say unpleasant things to or speak ill of another, let him not speak with the motive of some gain; let him not mislead another through his words, nor create in the mind of another doubt about his (latter's) faith. Let him speak only such words as are true, sweet, palatable and salutary and cause no annoyance to another; the rest of his time he should devote exclusively to the remembrance of the Divine Name. Let him regard the utterance of a single superfluous word as a great loss, inasmuch as the time spent over it is wasted. The practice of *Nāma-Japa* is disturbed during that interval, apart from the harmful influence exerted on the atmosphere by useless words. Let him know it for certain that Divine Love, Divine Knowledge or God-Realization can never be attained through argumentation, or controversial reasoning. These latter, on the contrary, gather together evils like egoism, hatred, anger, malice and violence. Therefore,

a statement is followed by a counter-statement, and the process goes on *ad infinitum*. In order to maintain their respective positions volleys of arguments are discharged from each side. The truth which can be realized only through Divine Grace, can never be realized through argumentative reasoning. Therefore such reasoning leads to no good. In the course of a discussion one party may feel exhausted through continued speaking or may fail to hit upon a cogent argument at the spur of the moment, thus enabling the other party to score a victory over him; but such a victory does not necessarily lead to Truth, for a conclusion arrived at through this process is never the Truth. Therefore, instead of wasting his time over discussions, a devotee should surrender himself completely to God, and practise constant remembrance of Him in a sincere and disinterested spirit. Divine Love is attained not through argument, but through the practice of Devotion.

sacred and elevating stories of God's beloved devotees as well as the glory, secret and excellence of God Himself, who being moved by the Love of the devotee makes Himself subservient to the latter. Divine Love manifests itself by the study of such devotional scriptures and through hearing and study of the teachings of saints and great devotees. It is true, the aspirant of Divine Love should neither read nor submit to the reading before him of books which refute God or the efficacy of the practice of Devotion, which slight their glories or decry God's beloved devotees, or which extol the value and glory of ephemeral earthly things. He will not derive profit even from the study of books which do not contain the glories of God, of His devotees or of the practice of Devotion. Besides, literature which tend to produce strong likes and dislikes, lust and anger, enmity and friction should not even be touched by him. That is why the saying goes —

the part of the *Brahmachārī*, the *Vānaprasthī* and the *Sannyāsī*, and for the *Gr̥hastha* (householder) maintenance of parents, wife, children and other dependants with proper respect and affection in the spirit of earning thereby the pleasure of God, earning of livelihood through truthful and righteous means and performance of sacrifices, charities and austerities, enjoined by the scriptures.

2. Practice of *Sadāchāra* (right conduct).
3. Attendance in *Satsanga* and hearing and *Kīrtana* of Divine Glory and meditation on the same.
4. Practice of *Japa* of the Divine Name, and remembrance and *Kīrtana* (loud chanting) of the same.
5. Worship of God, prayer and obeisance.
6. Personal service of saints and devotees and carrying out their behests with reverence.
7. Residing in places of pilgrimage.

O Uddhava, one may attain Divine Love if he worships Me with these practices through surrender of self. When he attains that, there remains nothing else to be attained by him."*

Again Prabuddha, the chief of Yogīs, described to Mahārājā Nimi, the discipline to be practised for the attainment of Divine Love, as follows.—

"He who is anxious to secure his highest good should resort to a preceptor versed in the Vedas, who has attained complete serenity of

* श्रद्धामृतकथायां मे शश्वन्मदनुकीर्तनम् ।
 परिनिष्ठा च पूजायां स्तुतिभिः स्तवन मम ॥
 आदरः परिचर्यायां सर्वाङ्गैरभिवन्दनम् ।
 मद्भक्तपूजाभ्यधिका सर्वभूतेषु मन्मतिः ॥
 मदर्थेष्वङ्गचेष्टा च वचसा मद्गुणेरणम् ।
 मय्यर्पणं च मनसः सर्वकामविवर्जनम् ॥
 मदर्थेऽर्थपरित्यागो भोगस्य च सुखस्य च ।
 इष्टं दत्तं हुतं जतं मदर्थं यद्व्रतं तपः ॥
 एवं धर्मेर्मनुष्याणामुद्धवात्मनिवेदिनाम् ।
 मयि सञ्जायते भक्तिः कोऽन्योऽर्थोऽस्यावशिष्यते ॥

(*Srīmad Bhagavata* XI xix 20—24)

own self or God Himself, the Supreme Being, and live in seclusion, regarding his home as belonging to God. He should dress himself in plain, ordinary clothes and feel satisfied with any food that he may get. He should have faith in the scriptures that deal with Divine Glory, but should not denounce other scriptures, and possess control over his mind, speech and activities, and be truthful, tranquil and self-possessed. He should always listen to, sing of, or contemplate on the wonderful deeds of Śrī Hari, His birth, activities and qualities, and resign to the Supreme Lord his sacrificial activities, gifts, austerities, *japa*, good conduct and whatever is beloved of him, his wife, children, house and his very life. Similarly, he should cultivate friendship with devotees whose soul and Lord is God and serve all creatures, mobile and immobile, all human beings and especially among them the righteous and Mahāpuruṣas (great souls who have realized God). He should learn how to sing and expound the glories of God, and to experience delight, self-satisfaction

Thus, Devotion grows through hearing of the recital or study of devotional scriptures, such as the *Bhāgavata*, the *Gītā*, the *Rāmāyaṇa*, etc., or through attendance in *Satsaṅga*, and practice of *Japa* and *Kīrtana* of the Divine Name performed in the spirit of cultivating the pleasure of God. The devotee should always strive to be virtuous by nature and should always devote his time in pursuit of noble activities. It is then only that his Devotion will grow.

Describing the marks of His beloved devotees, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa said in the *Gītā* —

इष्टं दत्तं तपो जतं वृत्तं यच्चात्मनः प्रियम् ।
 दारान् सुतान् गृहान् प्राणान् यत्परस्मै निवेदनम् ॥
 एवं कृष्णात्मनाथेषु मनुष्येषु च सौहृदम् ।
 परिचर्यां चोभयत्र महत्सु नृषु साधुषु ॥
 परस्परानुकथनं पावनं भगवद्यशः ।
 मिथौ रतिर्मिथस्तुष्टिर्निवृत्तिर्मिथ आत्मनः ॥
 स्मरन्तः स्मारयन्तश्च मिथोऽघौघहरं हरिम् ।
 भक्त्या सज्जातया भक्त्या विभ्रत्युत्पुल्कां तनुम् ॥

(*Srimad Bhagavata* XI iii 21-31)

“He who is alike to friend and foe and to honour and dishonour, who is alike to heat and cold, pleasure and pain, and is freed from attachments,—

“He who takes praise and reproach alike, who is given to meditation and content with anything that comes, without attachment to home, fixed in mind and full of Devotion towards Me, that man is dear to Me.

“They who partake of the nectar of wisdom herein laid down, who are endowed with faith and are supremely devoted to Me, those devotees are extremely dear to Me ”*

* अद्वेष्टा सर्वभूताना मैत्रः करुण एव च ।
निर्ममो निरहङ्कारः समदुःखसुखः क्षमी ॥
सन्तुष्टः सतत योगी यतात्मा दृढनिश्चयः ।
मय्यर्पितमनोबुद्धिर्यो मद्भक्तः स मे प्रियः ॥
यस्मान्नोद्विजते लोको लोकान्नोद्विजते च यः ।
हर्षमर्षभयोद्वेगैर्मुक्तो यः स च मे प्रियः ॥
अनपेक्षः शुचिर्दक्ष उदासीनो गतव्यथः ।
सर्वारम्भपरित्यागी यो मद्भक्तः स मे प्रियः ॥
यो न हृष्यति न द्वेष्टि न शोचति न काङ्क्षति ।
शुभाशुभपरित्यागी भक्तिमान् यः स मे प्रियः ॥

सुखदुःखेच्छालाभादित्यक्ते काले प्रतीक्ष्यमाणे
क्षणार्द्धमपि व्यर्थं न नेयम् ॥७७॥

77. Even half a second should not be wasted (without *Bhajana*) in expectation of the moment when pleasure and pain, desire and sense of worldly gain, etc., would be (totally) abandoned.

There is no doubt that when perfection is attained in the path of Devotion all struggles between pairs of opposites like pleasure and pain, gain and loss, etc, automatically cease, and there persists no longer the desire for any worldly object But if the practicant only waits in expectation of that auspicious moment, and does not in the meantime carry on any practice, how will he get over his present degraded condition, and suddenly and without any effort reach that blessed state? Moreover, human life is uncertain even for a second, no one knows at what particular moment of time a man may be overtaken by Death,—

world before reaching old age? The naked sword of Death is constantly hanging over your head. There is an illustration to bring home this truth. A bee entering the corolla of a lotus was sucking its nectar and got infatuated with the sweetness of its smell, when the dusk approached. With the setting of the sun, the petals of the lotus close, so the lotus shut itself up within its calyx, and the bee possessing the power to bore through the hardest timber got itself shut up within the petals due to its infatuation, and began to reflect as follows.—

"The night will pass, and there will be morning again; when the sun will rise and its rays will fall on the lotus, the petals will open and I shall get out of the lotus. Till then let me continue to enjoy this nectar" *

रात्रिर्गमिष्यति भविष्यति सुप्रभातं

भास्वानुदेष्यति हसिष्यति पङ्कजश्रीः ।

इत्थं विचिन्तयति कोशगते द्विरेफे

हा हन्त हन्त नलिनीं गज उज्जहार ॥

suffering throughout from the pangs of his (real or fancied) wants. Therefore, one should devote oneself to *Bhajana* from the very start, giving up the idea that he will do so after having completely satisfied his worldly wants, or after acquiring thorough satisfaction through enjoyment of worldly objects

Besides, there is this fact also to be considered that at the present moment due to the influence of good company, the urge for God-Realization or attainment of Devotion has grown within us, and we have, even if for a moment, recognized that as the goal of our life; the idea is revolving within our mind that we shall begin the practice for the realization of the goal after reaching a certain state in our worldly circumstances. Are we sure that this is not a deceptive train of thought? In the first instance, there is no certainty that we shall ever realize the circumstances for which we may be craving, secondly, where is the guarantee that our goal itself will not shift by

previous practice the habit has become thoroughly established. That is why Mahārāja Bhartrhari said —

“So long as this body is in good health, old age at a distance, the senses are strong, and some days of life are yet left, the wise man should vigorously strive for his highest good. What does it profit a man who starts digging a well when the house is already on fire ?”*

It is on account of this that devotees, taking their refuge in the Lord, wail out from the depth of their heart:—

“Life is being wasted from moment to moment, youth is approaching its end, the day that is passed does not return, *Kāla* (Time) is devouring the world, the Goddess of Wealth is as unsteady as waves in a river, life is as fleeting as lightning itself,

* यावत्स्वस्थमिदं कलेवरगृहं यावच्च दूरे जरा
यावच्चेन्द्रियशक्तिरप्रतिहता यावत्क्षयो नायुषः ।
आत्मश्रेयसि तावदेव विदुषा कार्यः प्रयत्नो महान्
प्रोद्दीप्ते भवने च कूपखननं प्रत्युद्यमः कीदृशः ॥

(*Vairagya-Shataka*)

should be as carefully devoted to the remembrance of God as a miser uses his limited number of coins Truly speaking, the time spent without *Bhajana* is the most terrible time for us. That is the greatest of calamity. Says Hanumān:—

“O Lord, when there is neither your remembrance nor *Bhajana*, that is (the time of) calamity and misfortune ”*

“The moment spent without the *Kirtana* of God’s Name and Glory should be regarded as the greatest of loss, that moment is the moment of Ignorance and Delusion ”†

There should be no waiting for any favourable or opportune time for the practice of *Bhajana* If that is done the whole of this invaluable human life will be wasted The best utility of human life lies in the practice of *Bhajana* Through the continued practice of *Bhajana*

* कह हनुमान बिपति प्रभु सोई ।

जब तव सुमिरन भजन न होई ॥

† सा हानिस्तन्महच्छिद्रं स मोहः स च विभ्रमः ।

यन्मुहूर्तं क्षणं वापि वासुदेवं न कीर्तयेत् ॥

tinuance of the remembrance of the lotus feet of God even for half a second, he will not agree to it. The bee of his heart remains unshakably attached to those Divine Feet, which even the Devas fail to realize through constant meditation and search '*.

Thus the devotee craves for nothing else. In a tone of anxiety and distress he goes on repeatedly saying, "I do not seek salvation, nor knowledge, nor worldly prosperity, nor supernatural powers, nor an undying fame. Let me take birth in any species of life, even this does not worry me at all. But, O my dearest Lord, let my Love for Thee, my unmotivated Love, my wayward and blind Love, my Love which is all Love without any other dross, Love which is full of Thee, O my Beloved, may grow from more to more every day."

* त्रिभुवनविभवहेतवेऽप्यकुण्ठ-

स्मृतिरजितात्मसुरादिभिर्विमृग्यात् ।

न चलति भगवत्पदारविन्दा-

ल्लवनिमिषार्धमपि यः स वैष्णवाग्रथः ॥

of *Sadachara* (right conduct) like *Ahimsa* (non-injury to others), Truth, Purity, Compassion, Faith in the existence of God, etc.

In aphorism 76 it has been advised to perform actions which lead to the growth of the spirit of Devotion. In the present aphorism by singling out five special items of conduct, the author establishes the extreme necessity of their observance

The divine qualities are a part and parcel of the character of devotees. Wherever there is observed any genuine growth of Devotion, it is inevitable for the divine qualities to be present there. It is an error on the part of some people when they say, "The primary thing is to cultivate Devotion, if the devotee lacks higher qualities, what does it matter ? Man may, indeed, commit any amount of sin, but if he is a devotee, he has nothing to care." This statement is as absurd and unreasonable as to say, "Let the sun rise, then if darkness should persist in the world,

qualities are growing in him, he is making progress in the path of Devotion; if he thinks mostly of the world and there is no growth of the divine qualities, then he is making no progress; and if worldly thoughts and the demoniacal qualities are growing, he is advancing towards a downfall. It is the character of the devotee to meditate on God with a loving heart and his mode of life is marked by the divine qualities. He renounces everything else in life, but these two he never renounces. In some particular cases, devotees who have attained *Siddhi* have no doubt to change their modes of life according to the behest or pleasure of God. But these are only exceptions, and not the rule. Even in such cases, it is not attachment, egoism, desire, pride or delusion which bring about the change. Whenever due to some circumstances there appears a conflict between the devotee's mode of life and the spirit of Divine Love, which is inherent in him, he would after securing the consent of God give up propriety of conduct for the protection of his own particular *Dharma*, his *Swadharma*. The illustra-

it is necessary that they should cultivate and preserve all the divine qualities and aspects of *Sādāchāra* enjoined by the scripture with extreme care and attention. The definitions of the five qualities specially mentioned by the author in this aphorism may be shortly understood to be as follows —

Ahimsā—It is that quality of the mind which prevents one from doing anything through the body, mind and speech which may cause suffering to any creature either in the present or in the future, on the contrary, it induces one to be engaged constantly in the attempt to make other creatures happy.

Truth—It is the cultivation of the spirit to convey to another through speech, writing or hint exactly what has been seen, heard or understood about a person or thing. It means also utterance of only such words as are true, and at the same time sweet and beneficial. Some people hold it to be necessary to make use

- (B) To maintain purity of wealth through earning of livelihood by truthful and unexceptionable means without wresting the rights of any other individual or class
- (C) To impart purity to food by offering to God articles cooked in a pure place by a cook who had bathed himself and prepared the articles from pure vegetables and corns.
- (D) To maintain purity of conduct and dealing through innocent, straight forward and loving behaviour.
- (E) To maintain purity of the home through entertainment of guests and loud chanting of the Divine Name.
- (F) To maintain the purity of all other external actions by regulating them according to the injunctions of the scriptures.

INTERNAL PURITY.

To keep the mind as far as possible free from evils like hypocrisy, enmity,

and the directions of the scriptures should be constantly present before the mental eye of the practicant. The moment you come to believe that God exists, that He is all-pervading, Lord of all, almighty, omniscient, supremely compassionate, supremely friendly, fond of His devotees, friend of the friendless, and always present everywhere, all sin and misery will get automatically destroyed. The need for the cultivation of this faith is paramount in every respect. With the generation of faith in the existence of God as well as in His power and glory, the mind will itself turn towards God. God is the store or repository of all the requirements of man. If he seeks Knowledge, God is the embodiment of Knowledge, if he seeks Love, God is Love itself; if he seeks Bliss (*Ānanda*), God is a compact body of Bliss, if he seeks dispassion (*वैराग्य*), God is the supreme embodiment of dispassion; if he seeks wealth, the Goddess of Wealth, *Laksmī*, abandoning Her unsteadiness, is constantly engaged

faith in the existence of God. At the command of his father, Hiranyakaśipu, hundreds and thousands of demons march furiously with their deadly weapons to kill him. But Prahlāda says:—

“O ye demons, my Lord Viṣṇu is present in these very weapons of yours, He is present within you, within me, and everywhere. By the power of this Truth, let all your weapons fail to produce any effect on me.”*

The weapons of the demons failed; although they struck Prahlāda hard with their weapons, yet the latter felt not the least pain in his body.

In the ferocious snakes and their venom, in the huge intoxicated elephants and their tusks as hard as adamant, Prahlāda saw his own beloved Lord. Therefore, they failed to do any injury

* विष्णुः शस्त्रेषु युष्मासु मयि चासौ व्यवस्थितः ।

दैतेयास्तेन सत्येन साक्रमन्त्वायुधानि च ॥

(Viṣṇupurāṇa, 1 17 33)

those who are attempting to kill me, let these priests come to life.”*

Prahlāda’s strong, unshakable faith in the existence of God, brought the priests to life. Finally, when in answer to a query from his father, Hiranyakaśipu, Prahlāda declared with unflinching determination, and with a certainty which could not be shaken — “Yes, my Lord is present everywhere, He is present even in this pillar”, God had to manifest Himself from the pillar to prove the truth of the statement of His servant and devotee. How marvellous is this firmness of faith, and how miraculous the result ! This is faith in the existence of God in the true sense of the term.

The devotee should constantly attempt to maintain this faith and

* यथा सर्वेषु भूतेषु सर्वव्यापी जगद्गुरुः ।

विष्णुरेव तथा सर्वे जीवन्त्वेते पुरोहिताः ॥

यथा सर्वगतं विष्णुं मन्यमानोऽनपायिनम् ।

चिन्तयाम्यरिपक्षेऽपि जीवन्त्वेते पुरोहिताः ॥

(*Pishnupurana*, 1 18. 40-41)

The devotee alone possesses these divine qualities. That is why he is styled a 'Deva'. The *Padmapurāṇa* says:—

"There are two types of beings in this world—one *Daiva* (divine) and the other *Āsura* (demoniac). The devotee belongs to the *Daiva* class. Beings other than this class belong to the *Āsura* group."*

सर्वदा सर्वभावेन निश्चिन्तितैर्भगवानेव
भजनीयः ॥७९॥

79. Every moment, with a whole heart, giving up all other thoughts, one should practise *Bhajana* (and *Bhajana* alone).

अहिंसा सत्यमक्रोधस्त्यागः शान्तिरपैशुनम् ।
दया भूतेष्वलोलुप्त्वं मार्दवं ह्रीरचापलम् ॥
तेजः क्षमा धृतिः शौचमद्रोहो नातिमानिता ।
भवन्ति सम्पदं दैवीमभिजातस्य भारत ॥

(XVI 1-8)

* द्वौ भूतसर्गौ लोकेऽस्मिन् दैव आसुर एव च ।
विष्णुभक्तः स्मृतो दैव आसुरस्ताद्विपर्ययः ॥

(*Padmapurana*)

the very embodiment of Knowledge and Dispassion, the solid image of Bliss, and although He is so great, He is also our greatest friend and is anxiously awaiting with out-stretched arms our arrival near him, so that He may give us an embrace; he who knows this truth—whether he is a man possessing a motive (सकामी) or has transcended all motives (अकामी), whether he is a worldly man or an aspirant to salvation, whether he is only a practicant or one who has attained *Siddhi* (success) by God-Realization—whoever he may be, is it ever possible for him to leave God even for half a second and engage his mind to wait upon anything else? We do not adore Him and wait upon Him, because we have not yet known His glory. If we have heard about this glory, we have not yet believed in it. The Devarṣi enjoins us to believe in it and engage ourselves constantly through our mind, speech and body in the practice of *Bhajana* of our most beloved Lord,

His *Prasāda* (food offered to Him), the nose to smelling the lotus of His feet, the body to feel His touch, the eyes to see always His beloved Form everywhere, the hands to serve Him. Thus offer Him your all—body, mind and all your earthly possessions

So long as you continue to regard the objects of the world as your own and maintain your attachments to them, you can never be free from worries and anxious thoughts; these destructible, transient and ever-changing objects will not allow you to be free from worries; so withdraw from them your sense of 'Mine' or attachment, and offer them to Him, who is their real owner. The moment you have offered them to God, you will become freed from worries. Then, no longer you will be swayed by the fear of their destruction, and neither the sense of want, nor the fire of worldly desires will give you any more trouble. When thus freed from all thoughts you will devote yourself to *Bhajana*, you will from time to time get a distant view

My husband is my chastity, I have
no refuge except He

'Sundara' is from every point of view,
worshipper of a single husband
The lover of water, fish, when
separated from water, gives up his
life,
Just as the snake when separated
from its jewel cannot live,
The lovers of the rain-drop falling
from the star *Svātī* is known
throughout the world—
One is the oyster, and the other
Chātaka (bird),
The lover of the Sun is the lotus
in the lake,
Just as the *Chakora* (partridge) lives
as the lover of the Moon,
Even so, O 'Sundara', attach your
Love to the Lord,
And let not your attention be
diverted to anything else '*

* पतिहीसूँ प्रेम होय, पतिहीसूँ नेम होय,
पतिहीसूँ छेम होय, पतिहीसूँ रत है ।
पति ही है जग्य-जोग, पति ही है रसभोग,
पतिहीसूँ मिटै सोग, पतिहीको जत है ॥
पतिहीको ग्यान ध्यान, पतिहीको पुन-दान,
पति ही है तीर्थ स्नान, पतिहीको मत है ।

If even after this definite assurance from the Lord we fail to devote ourselves constantly, with a whole heart, and free from worries, to the practice of *Bhajana*, who is more unfortunate than we?

Therefore, realizing our highest good to lie only in this, we should devote ourselves whole-heartedly to the *Bahjana* and *Kirtana* of Śrī Hari's Name, every moment of our life, whether we are engaged in action or resting, whether we are awake or asleep, seeing the existence of God in every object and abandoning all worries about profit and loss, life and death.



सर्वधर्मान्परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज ।

अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥

(*Gita* XVIII 65-66)

attributes and form and without the same. It is He, who is *Brahma*, which is beyond the mind and intellect; it is He, who is the Creator with attributes, formless and all-pervading, it is He, who is the soul of the universe; it is He, who manifests Himself as Śrī Rāma and Śrī Kṛṣṇa; it is He, who is Mahāśiva, Mahāviṣṇu or Mahādevī; again, it is He, who is the Universal Person (विराट् पुरुष). There is nothing which is apart from Him. When drawn by the Love of the obstinate, Love-intoxicated devotee, He makes the divine Bliss aspect His instrument, and blesses the devotee by revealing Himself as the very treasure of Beauty adorned with clothes, garland, fragrance, weapons and ornaments, which are all divine and spiritual in character

“The saints, men of wisdom, Purāṇas and Vedās, all declare that there is no difference between *Saguṇa* (Divine manifestation with attributes) and *Aṇuṇa* (the Absolute).

“He who is Absolute, Formless, Invisible, Unborn appears as *Saguṇa*

l virtues and attributes and are the eternal aspects of the Form of the Lord, who is above the Gunas. That is why the sages get attracted by them. That is why even the greatest teacher of *Ādānta*, Āchārya Śrī Śankara, speaks with reference to Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa—"Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who showed many universes to Brahmā, each universe possessing its own distinctive and wonderful Brahmā, showed the cowherd boys with calves and all the Forms of Viṣṇu manifested in the different universes, the sanctified water washing whose feet is held by Śrī Śiva on His head, is different from the *Trimūrti* [Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva—divine incarnations in *Aṃsa* (part) manifested in every universe for regulating it]; He is an immutable, blue-coloured effulgence embodying *Sat*, *Chit* and *Ānanda* (Existence, Knowledge and Bliss)."*

* ब्रह्माण्डानि बहूनि पद्मजभवान् प्रत्यण्डमत्यद्भुतान्
गोपान् वत्सयुतानदर्शयदज विष्णूनशेषाश्च यः ।
शम्भुर्यच्चरणोदकं स्वशिरसा धत्ते स मूर्तित्रयात्
कृष्णो वे पृथगस्ति कोऽप्यविकृतः सच्चिन्मयो नीलिमा ॥

This very condition was experienced by King Janaka of Mithilā, chief among the wise, the best among those who possessed the Knowledge of *Brahma*, when he saw the Forms of Lord Śrī Rāma and Śrī Lakṣmaṇa —

“Seeing the sweet, enchanting Form the King of *Videha* (Mithilā) became all the more *Videha* (devoid of body-consciousness)

“Finding that his heart is merged in Love, the King recalled his discrimination and steadied himself Bowing his head at the feet of the sage, he said in a choked voice deep with emotion ”*

As soon as that reservoir of Beauty appeared before him, the wisdom of the Lord of *Videha* as if swooned, his body-consciousness began to leave him, his eyes became full of tears. King Janaka wondered what had happened to him. How does the mind of Janaka get

* मूरति मधुर मनोहर देखी । मयउ बिदेहु बिदेहु बिसेषी ॥
प्रेम मगन मनु जानि नृपु करि बिबेकु धरि धीर ।
बोलेउ मुनि पद नाइ सिरु गदगद गिरा गभीर ॥

Love, and has renounced, as if by force, the Bliss of *Brahma* '*

With a smile on his lips the sage supported the inference of the King.

The form, which though seen again and again goes on increasing the desire to see it, must be an extraordinary form. There is no such object in the world which though seen over and over again, increases the desire to see it. It is a common experience that the first sight of an object for which there may be a strong desire gives excessive joy; but the more the sight becomes familiar, the less becomes the attraction for it. But the character of the Beauty of God is such that there

* कहहु नाथ सुंदर दोउ बालक ।

मुनि कुल तिलक कि नृप कुल पालक ॥

ब्रह्म जो निगम नेति कहि गावा ।

उभय वेष धरि की सोइ आवा ॥

सहज बिरागरूप मनु मोरा । थकित होत जिमि चद चकोरा ॥

ताते प्रभु पूछउँ सति भाऊ । कहहु नाथ जनि करहु दुराऊ ॥

इन्हहि बिलोकत अति अनुरागा । बरबस ब्रह्मसुखहि मन त्यागा ॥

speech and mind) the path of *Bhakti* (Devotion) is the best path, it is the best [Or, in all the three forms of Time, *Bhakti* (Devotion) to true God is the best path, it is the best].

Truth as practised through the body, speech and mind is called the three forms of Truth. Devarsi Nārada has realized the superiority of *Bhakti* from the standpoint of all these three Truths Therefore, he repeatedly declares that the path of *Bhakti* is the best path This statement of the Devarsi is corroborated even by the Upanisads Thus.—

सर्वोपायान् परित्यज्य भक्तिमाश्रय ।
 भक्तिनिष्ठो भव, भक्तिनिष्ठो भव ।
 भक्त्या सर्वं सिद्ध्यति भक्त्यासाध्यं न किञ्चिदस्ति ।

(*Tripadvibhūtinārāyaṇopaniṣad*)

“Abandoning all other methods take recourse only to *Bhakti* (Devotion). Be devoted to *Bhakti*, be devoted only to *Bhakti* Through *Bhakti* all forms of perfection are easily

went to the length of declaring the devotee to be 'युक्तम', the best and highest among those who are united to Him. This is why the Devarsi defying the whole world declares in a loud, stentorian voice that according to all the three forms of Truth (practised through body, speech and mind), or in all the three forms of time (past, present and future), the practice of Devotion to true God is the best spiritual path, it is undoubtedly the best.

गुणमाहात्म्यासक्तिरूपासक्तिपूजासक्ति-
 स्मरणासक्तिदास्यासक्तिसख्यासक्तिकान्तासक्ति-
 वात्सल्यासक्त्यात्मनिवेदनासक्तितन्मयतासक्ति-
 परमविश्वासक्तिरूपा एकधाप्येकादशधा
 भवति ॥८२॥

82. Although fundamentally one, Divine Love has the following eleven types : (1) Attachment to virtue and glory ; (2) Attachment to Form ; (3) Attachment to Adoration ; (4) Attach-

few names are cited by way of illustration—

- (1) Attachment to virtue and glory—Devarṣi Nārada, Maharṣi Vedavyāsa, Śukadeva, Yājñavalkya, Kākbhuṣuṇḍi, Śeṣa, Sūta, Śaunaka, Śāndilya, Bhīṣma, Arjuna, Parīksit, Prthu, Janamejaya, etc.
- (2) Attachment to Form—Men and women of Mithilā, Janaka, the Ṛsis of Daṇḍakāraṇya, the women of Vraja.
- (3) Attachment to Adoration—Śrī Lakṣmī, Prthu, Ambarīṣa, Śrī Bharata, etc.
- (4) Attachment to Remembrance—Prahlaḍa, Dhruva, Sanaka, etc.
- (5) Attachment as servant—Śrī Hanumān, Akrūra, Vidura, etc.
- (6) Attachment as friend—Arjuna, Uddhava, Sañjaya, Śrīdāmā, Sudāmā, etc.

according to the predominance of sentiment of the respective devotees.

इत्येवं वदन्ति जनजल्पनिर्भया एकमताः
कुमारव्यासशुकशाण्डिल्यगर्गविष्णुकौण्डिन्यशेषोद्ध-
वारुणिवलिहनुमद्विभीषणादयो भक्त्याचार्याः॥८३॥

83. All the Acharyas (Teachers) of *Bhakti* like Kumara (Sanatkumara and others), Vedavyasa, Shukadeva, Shandilya, Garga, Vishnu, Kaundinya, Shesha, Uddhava, Aruni, Bali, Hanuman, Bibhishana, etc., without caring for popular praise or blame, unanimously declare this (that *Bhakti* is the best path).

Giving the reference of other principal teachers of the path of *Bhakti*, Devarsi Nārada strengthens his own point of view. The names he cites were those of the Masters and Āchāryas of *Bhakti* (Devotion). Sanatkumāra is constantly engaged in the *Japa* of the *Mantra* 'हरि. शरणम्' (Refuge to Śrī Hari) and is one of the pioneers in the path

held to be the other name of Nimbārka, who was a worshipper of the dual Form (Śrī Rādhā and Śrī Kṛṣṇa). Bali was the very embodiment of the sentiment of self-surrender, moved by his Devotion God had to undertake the duty of a watchman at his gate. The servant-sentiment of Hanumān, the chief of devotees, is well-known to all. It was through his Devotion that the great soul, Bibhīṣana, earned the friendship of Lord Śrī Rāmachandra. All these Āchāryas of *Bhakti*, without caring for the praise or blame of the people, have sung the praises of *Bhakti*. Through the examples of their lives they have established the supremacy of *Bhakti*. Strengthened by their support, Devarsi Nārada fearlessly sounds the trumpet of *Bhakti*.

य इदं नारदप्रोक्तं शिवानुशासनं विश्वसिति
श्रद्धते स प्रेष्ठं लभते स प्रेष्ठं लभत इति ॥८४॥

84. He who believes and respects this teaching of Shīva enunciated by Nārada

